Frommer's®

Prague day BY day™

1st Edition

by Mark Baker

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A Note from the Publisher

Organizing your time. That's what this guide is all about.

Other guides give you long lists of things to see and do and then expect you to fit the pieces together. The Day by Day guides are different. These guides tell you the best of everything, and then they show you how to see it *in the smartest, most time-efficient way*. Our authors have designed detailed itineraries organized by time, neighborhood, or special interest. And each tour comes with a bulleted map that takes you from stop to stop.

Would you like to follow in Kafka's footsteps or spend a day exploring Prague castle? Planning a walk through Prague's Old Town? Hoping to sample some Czech beers at a traditional pub? Whatever your interest or schedule, the Day by Days give you the smartest routes to follow. Not only do we take you to the top attractions, hotels, and restaurants, but we also help you access those special moments that locals get to experience—those "finds" that turn tourists into travelers.

The Day by Days are also your top choice if you're looking for one complete guide for all your travel needs. The best hotels and restaurants for every budget, the greatest shopping values, the wildest nightlife—it's all here.

Why should you trust our judgment? Because our authors personally visit each place they write about. They're an independent lot who say what they think and would never include places they wouldn't recommend to their best friends. They're also open to suggestions from readers. If you'd like to contact them, please send your comments my way at mspring@wiley.com, and I'll pass them on.

Enjoy your Day by Day guide—the most helpful travel companion you can buy. And have the trip of a lifetime.

Warm regards,

Michael Spring, Publisher
Frommer's Travel Guides

About the Author

Journalist, photographer, and freelance writer **Mark Baker** has lived in Prague off and on since 1991. He was one of the original editors of *The Prague Post* and a long-time radio correspondent with Prague-based Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. He is a frequent contributor to the *Wall Street Journal Europe* and *National Geographic Traveler,* among other publications.

An Additional Note

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time—and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experiences of readers while traveling. Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings.

Star Ratings, Icons & Abbreviations

Every hotel, restaurant, and attraction listing in this guide has been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities, and special features using a **star-rating system.** Hotels, restaurants, attractions, shopping, and nightlife are rated on a scale of zero stars (recommended) to three stars (exceptional). In addition to the star-rating system, we also use a **kids icon** to point out the best bets for families. Within each tour, we recommend cafes, bars, or restaurants where you can take a break. Each of these stops appears in a shaded box marked with a coffee-cup-shaped bullet .

The following **abbreviations** are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express	DISC	Discover	V	Visa
DC	Diners Club	MC	MasterCard		

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- Vacation sweepstakes and contest giveaways
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- Online travel message boards with featured travel discussions

A Note on Prices

In the "Take a Break" and "Best Bets" sections of this book, we have used a system of dollar signs to show a range of costs for 1 night in a hotel (the price of a double-occupancy room) or the cost of an entree at a restaurant. Use the following table to decipher the dollar signs:

Cost	Hotels	Restaurants
$	under $100	under $10
$$	$100–$200	$10–$20
$$$	$200–$300	$20–$30
$$$$	$300–$400	$30–$40
$$$$$	over $400	over $40

An Invitation to the Reader

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

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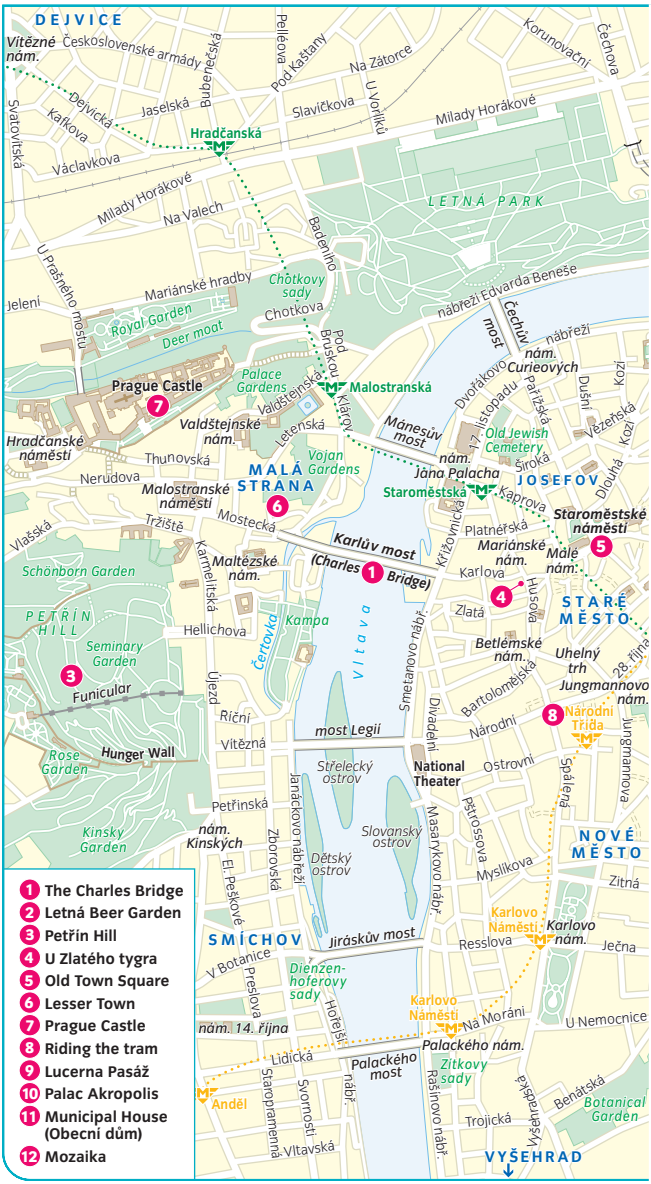
12 Favorite **Moments**

12 Favorite **Moments**



1. The Charles Bridge
2. Letná Beer Garden
3. Petřín Hill
4. U Zlatého tygra
5. Old Town Square
6. Lesser Town
7. Prague Castle
8. Riding the tram
9. Lucerna Pasáž
10. Palac Akropolis
11. Municipal House (Obecní dům)
12. Mozaika

Previous page: The Charles Bridge at dawn.

Metro stop
Pedestrian passage
Steps
0 1/5 mi
0 0.2 km
HOLEŠOVICE
Veletržní
Ovenecká
Heřmanova
Milady Horákové
Františka Křižíka
Veverkova
Dukelských hrdinů
Janovského
Režačovo nám.
Letohradská
Kostelní
Letenský Tunnel
2
nábřeží Kpt. Jaroše
Vltava
most Štefánikův
Vltavská
Hlávkův most
ostrov Štvanice
Rohanské nábřeží
Pobřežní
Sokolovská
Karlínské nám.
Křižíkova
Prvního pluku
KARLÍN
Pernerova
Těšnovský Tunnel
nábř. L. Svobody
Lannova
Klimentská
Revoluční
Soukenická
Petrské nám.
Petrská
Haštalské nám.
Dlouhá
Truhlářská
Na Poříčí
Florenc
Ke Sténici
Wilsonova
Rybná
Náměstí Republiky
V Celnici
Na Florenci
11
nám. Republiky
Masarykovo Station
Celetná
Hybernská
Ovocný trh
Senovážná
Senovážné náměstí
Na příkopě
Nekázanka
Panská
Jindřišská
Politických vězňů
Růžová
Opletalova
Vrchlického sady
Hlavní nádraží
Hlavní nádraží (Main Train Station)
Italská
Hybernská
Wilsonova
Husitská
Řehořova
Orebitská
Kostnické nám.
Cimburkova
Seifertova
nám. W. Churchilla
ŽIŽKOV
Vítkov Hill
Vítkova
Krásova
Bořivojova
U Rajské zahrady
Vlkova
Kubelíkova
10
Mahlerovy sady
Žižkov TV Tower
Škroupovo nám.
Slavíkova
Chopinova
Riegrovy sady
Vozová
Španělská
Na Smetance
Polská
Mánesova
Vinohradská
Jiřího z Poděbrad
sady Svatopluka Čecha
U Vodárny
12
Nitranská
Dykova
Bezručovy sady
Slovenská
Ruská
Krymská
Charkovská
Donská
Rybalkova
Kopernikova
Havlíčkovy sady
Machova
Americká
Francouzská
Varšavská
Lužická
Moravská
Chodská
Kladská
Korunní
Slezská
Sázavská
Budečská
VINOHRADY
Římská
Blanická
Anglická
Balbínova
Legerova
Washingtonova
Wilsonova
Opletalova
Vodičkova
Václavské náměstí (Wenceslas Square)
9
Štěpánská
Ve Smečkách
Krakovská
Mezibranská
Zitná
Muzeum
National Museum
Jeruzalémská
Jindřišská
Jungmannova
Na Poříčí
Jana Masaryka
Záhřebská
Belgická
Londýnská
Rumunská
Lublaňská
Bělehradská
Fügnerovo nám.
Ke Karlovu
Vinična
Apolinářská
Wenzigova
Studničná
B. Němcové
Ječná
nám. I.P. Pavlova
I.P. Pavlova
Jugoslavská
Tylovo nám.
nám. Míru
Náměstí Míru
Lipová
Kateřinská
Bolíšti
Legerova
Sokolská

Prague's breathtaking beauty has been discovered. The city now ranks among the most popular in Europe. That's great news for the economy and for people who live from the trade, but for me it means I need to plan my special moments carefully. I am a recluse by nature, and I love the feeling of having a place to myself. These are my tips for moving away from the masses. I hope you enjoy them too.

Relaxing at the Letná Beer Garden.

1 Walking across the Charles Bridge. It doesn't matter if it's early in the morning, late in the evening, in the rain, in the fog, in the snow . . . anytime but on a hot, crowded day in summer. The bridge is best when you have it nearly to yourself. It's only then that you really notice the eternal spirit of the bridge, the breeze coming in off the river, and the subtle play of lights and shapes among the statues, the domes of Malá Strana, and the castle off in the distance. ***See p 13.***

2 Spending a summer evening at the Letná Beer Garden, perched around a table of old friends. If you want to know where the whole city seems to go for that after-work beer in the summer, look no further than Letná. Bankers, lawyers, students, mothers with kids, people with dogs—they're all here, sitting at picnic tables and drinking 20 Kč beer out of plastic cups. The spectacular views out over the Old Town lend a special feeling to the night. ***See p 89.***

3 Walking across Petřín Hill. It's the most inspiring view in the city, yet on a typical weekday it seems everyone else is too busy to notice. When I get the chance to slip away, I take the funicular up to Petřín and then make this trek across the top of the meadow toward Prague Castle. There's a little trail to follow and several benches to rest on. Occasionally, I run into another Prague resident, usually walking his or her dog, who loves this place just as much as I do. ***See p 85.***

4 Drinking Pilsner Urquell at a real Czech pub like U Zlatého tygra or U Černého vola. The new watering holes in town are nice, but nothing beats the simplicity of a wooden table, a crowd of friends, and a half-liter of the beer that conquered the world. It's true that the stodgy food at these places could stand some improvement, but no one really comes for the food anyway. ***See p 115.***

5 Hanging out on Old Town Square. Yes, it's touristy, filled to overflowing most days with tour groups, dubious street musicians, festivals, and lots and lots of (admittedly) average restaurants. Still, somehow it works. No place in Prague feels more lively or connected to the outside world. Any time of day or night is fine, but evenings are my favorite. There's something about entering the square from the Malé náměstí side, rounding the Clock Tower, and catching those floodlighted towers of the Týn Church and the dark Baroque facades below. Every night feels like a street party. *See p 65.*

6 Getting lost in the Lesser Town. Malá Strana is special. It doesn't have the sheer number of traditional tourist sites that Old Town does, and it draws far fewer visitors. My favorite area is Kampa Island and the little bridges across the Čertovká that connect with the mainland. If I have lots of time and sunshine, I pack a lunch, book, and blanket and head for the grassy meadow of Kampa Park. From there, I like to walk back along the river off Na Kampě toward the Charles Bridge. The entire district feels timeless. ***See p 59.***

A tram passing by the National Theater.

The Old Castle Steps in Malá Strana.

7 Enjoying the splendor of Prague Castle, especially strolling through St. Vitus Cathedral. If you've got the energy, climb the 287 steps of the South Tower for some inspiring views of the Castle complex below, and Malá Strana and Old Town out in the distance. When I come on my own, I rarely buy a ticket to go inside the Royal Palace. It's enough for me just to amble around the courtyards and soak in the atmosphere. And don't forget, you can enter St. Vitus for free. ***See p 31.***

8 Riding the tram. It doesn't have to be in any particularly scenic area. The trams are to Prague what the subways are to New York—the lifelines of the city. Each car is a microcosm of society and wonderfully democratic, ferrying everyone from students to government ministers. When I have a few hours of time, I sometimes hop a tram heading in any direction just to see what's out there. 20 Kč gets you 90 minutes of travel (except at rush hour). That's enough to cover a lot of ground. ***See p 50.***

9 Poking around Lucerna Pasáž. I am not much of a shopper, but I love coming here. It's not for the stores—most of them seem to sell impractical, one-of-a-kind items like antique cameras. It's more the 1920–1930s feel. Modern shopping malls promise

Lucerna Pasáž.

a lifestyle experience, but this place actually delivers, with several great cafes, an old-fashioned movie theater, a big hall for balls and dances, and a great rock and jazz club in the basement. It's amazing that it's withstood the test of time. I fully expect in a few years it will be filled with lifeless chain stores, but for now, Lucerna is still something special. *See p 23.*

10 Catching a show at the Palac Akropolis. Prague's changed a lot in the nearly 20 years since the fall of communism. Most of the changes have been for the better, but it sometimes feels like the city has lost its edge. This longtime nightclub and social staple in Žižkov still pulls in its share of great rock and folk acts. On quieter nights, it's good for just chilling out in the restaurant or cafe

The Czech National Symphonic Orchestra performing at the Obcení dům.

upstairs, or listening to the DJs spin tunes in the basement. This is the place to come when I want to feel that vibe that brought me to Prague in the first place. *See p 131.*

11 Getting tickets for a concert at the Municipal House. It's a rare treat to snag a good seat in the opulent Smetana Hall at the Obecní dům. Locals complain that concert programmers sometimes play it too safe, loading the card with crowd pleasers like Smetana, Janáček, and Dvořák. That's fine by me, and I'm sure by most visitors as well. Czech composers are too rarely played abroad, so come and hear them when you've got the chance. If you can't book something at the Smetana, the Rudolfinum will do just fine. *See p 9.*

12 Having a dinner out in "new Prague." Part of the thrill of watching a city recover and develop is witnessing the explosion of new businesses, places to go, and things to do. Nowhere is this dynamism more apparent than in the restaurant business. And you don't need to drop a lot of money to eat well. My favorite place at the moment is Mozaika (p 105). I also love Oliva (p 106), Černý Kohout (p 102), and Aromi (p 98). They all revel in good food and know that to succeed in Prague it's not enough to cater only to the tourists.

1 The Best **Full-Day Tours**

The Best in One Day

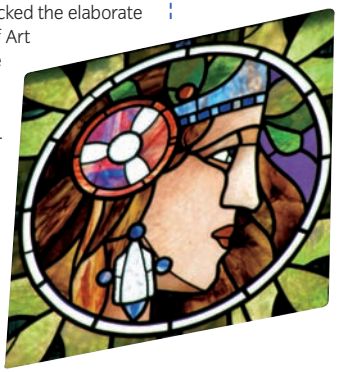
Previous page: Old Town Square.

This one-day tour follows the ancient coronation route of Bohemian kings. It's impossible to see all the major sights in a day, but this walk comes as close as humanly possible. You can do it in 3 or 4 hours without stops. If you decide to poke your nose in here or there, it can stretch into a whole day. Be forewarned: There's a lot of ground to cover from the Powder Tower to Prague Castle, so get an early start and wear comfortable shoes. **START: Náměstí Republiky.**

1 ★ Powder Tower (Prašná brána). The late-Gothic Powder Tower is one of the last standing remnants of the Old Town's original fortification system and marks the start of the Royal coronation route. The name derives from the tower's early purpose: to hold gunpowder for defending the city. The tower dates from the 15th century, but the trademark golden spires were a relatively late addition from the 19th century. You can clamber up to the top for a view out over the Old Town, but better to save your strength for one of the many other towers that lie on the road ahead. *10 min. 50 Kč. Daily 10am–6pm.*

Powder Tower.

2 ★★ Municipal House (Obecní dům). Before proceeding down Celetná and starting the Royal Route, take a peek inside this ornate Art Nouveau building from the early days of the 20th century. The Municipal House was built as an expression of Czech nationalism (at a time when Czechs and Germans were rivals for cultural supremacy). The architects consciously mimicked the elaborate Parisian variant of Art Nouveau over the more subdued "Secession" style favored in Vienna. Today, it's home to one of the leading orchestras, the Prague Symphony Orchestra (see chapter 8), as well as a cafe, French restaurant, traditional pub, and cocktail bar. Fans of Art Nouveau should take a guided tour of the interior. *15 min., 1½ hr. with tour. Náměstí Republiky 5. ☎ 222-002-121. 150 Kč (adult), 250 Kč (family). Metro: Náměstí Republiky.*



Detail of stained glass on Municipal House exterior.

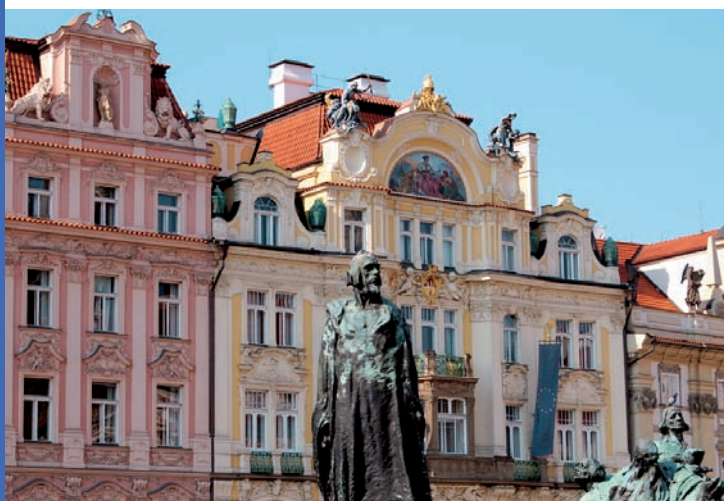
The National Theater performs an experimental version of Don Giovanni *at Estates Theater every year.*

3 ★ House of the Black Madonna (Dům U černé Matky Boží). This former department store—now housing a Museum of Czech Cubism and a beautiful 1920s-era cafe—is one of the best examples of Cubist architecture from the first decades of the 20th century. Cubism is a style that most people associate with painting, but Prague architects saw in the style a modern alternative to the boring historicist trends of the 19th century. The small Museum of Czech Cubism shows how eye-catching, angular Cubist styles could also be adapted to sculpture, textiles, furniture, and household goods. *30 min. Celetná 34. 224-211-746. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm.*

4 ★ Estates Theater (Stavovské divadlo). A short detour along the Ovocný trh (the pedestrian zone leading off to the left) brings you to this historic theater, which in 1787 saw the world premiere of Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni,* conducted by Mozart himself. *15 min.*

5 ★★★ Old Town Square (Staroměstské nám.). Returning to Celetná and continuing the walk soon takes you into the heart of Old Town: "Staromák," as Czechs affectionately refer to Old Town Square. The square has been at the center of the city's economic life for nearly 1,000 years and is one of the most beautifully preserved Gothic and Baroque spaces in Europe. To get your bearings, stand with the

Brightly-painted facades in Old Town Square.



One of Old Town Hall's intricate windows.

twin-spire Church of Our Lady Before Týn (or simply "Týn Church") to your immediate right; a statue of Czech Protestant reformer Jan Hus stands in the middle. Diagonally across is the white St. Nicholas Church (not to be confused with the church of the same name in Malá Strana). Straight ahead is the Old Town Hall (Staroměstská radnice), with a clock tower on top and fascinating medieval astronomical clock on the side. 🕘 ***20 min.***

6 ★★ Church of Our Lady Before Týn (kostel Matky Boží před Týnem). There's something undeniably bewitching about this Gothic church's spires rising up over a row of Baroque facades below. At night, brilliant floodlights illuminate the towers, making the effect even more powerful. The church dates from the 14th century and was once Prague's leading Hussite (Protestant) church. In fact, its spires once held a giant golden chalice (the sign of the Hussites) between them, which the Catholics promptly melted into a golden Madonna (still visible on the front of the church). The interior is largely Baroque. To the right of the main altar you'll find the tomb of famed Danish astronomer Tycho de Brahe of the court of Rudolf II. Enter through the arcades under the red address marker 604. 🕘 ***30 min. Staroměstské nám. Free admission. Tues–Sun 10am–1pm, 3–5pm.***

7 ★★ Old Town Hall (Staroměstská radnice). If you have legs for only one tower climb,

Týn church.

Huge crowds gather in front of the astronomical clock every hour.

make it this one. The view to the square below is beloved by photographers everywhere—one of the signature views of Prague. There's an elevator if you're not up for the narrow steps. The Old Town Hall occasionally hosts art and photo exhibitions. It's also home to a branch of the tourist office. Before leaving, walk over to where the Town Hall fronts the square. On the ground you'll find 27 X's marking the spot where in 1621 the Hapsburgs beheaded 27 Bohemian noblemen in hopes of frightening the local populace into accepting Austrian rule. Austria remained in control for 300 years until the end of World War I. 🕘 ***30 min. Staroměstské nám. 1/3.*** ☎ ***724-508-584. 60 Kč (tower). Apr–Oct Mon 11am–6pm, Tues–Sun 9am–6pm; Nov–Mar Mon 11am–5pm, Tues–Sun 9am–5pm.***

8 ★★★ Astronomical Clock (Orloj). If it's close to the top of the hour, race over to the city's number one crowd pleaser: the medieval astronomical clock. The clock was not used to tell time; instead it was meant to mark the phases of the moon, the seasons, and the Christian holidays. At the top of the hour, the brief, eerie, medieval morality play unfolds. Two doors slide open and the 12 apostles glide past, while the 15th-century symbols of evil—death, vanity, corruption, and greed—shake and dance below. Legend has it that Master Hanuš, one of the clock's designers, was blinded by the Municipal Council after he finished repairing the masterpiece so that he couldn't build an even more spectacular clock somewhere else. 🕘 ***15 min.***

9 ★ Karlova. From the astronomical clock walk toward the adjoining Small Square (Malé nám.), passing the ornate Renaissance sgraffito of the "House at the Minute" (Dům u minuty). Franz Kafka lived here as a kid. Karlova street begins at the corner of the Small Square and wends its way eventually to the Charles Bridge (Karlův most). Not long ago this street was filled with student cafes and pubs. Now, with the massive influx of tourists, it's mostly T-shirt and glass shops, but still fun to meander. Astronomy buffs will be interested in the house at no. 4, once the residence of Johannes Kepler. It was Kepler who finally figured out the paths of the planets, settling once and for all the debate over whether the earth or the sun lies at the center of the solar system. 🕘 ***20 min.***

10 U zlatého tygra. If it's after 3pm, stop at the intersection of Karlova and Husová for a quick beer or a light meal at one of the few remaining authentic Czech pubs in

the center of the city. The Pilsner Urquell beer here is rumored to be the freshest in the city. It's still considered an "old man's pub," so you'll need to show respect for the regulars. This pub's place in Prague lore looms so large that Václav Havel even invited U.S. president Bill Clinton to have a beer here in 1994. *Husová 17.* ☎ *222-221-111. $.*

⓫ ★★★ Charles Bridge (Karlův most). Karlova eventually deposits you at the start of what is arguably Prague's most stunning architectural attraction. When this bridge was first built in the 14th and 15th centuries, it was considered one of the wonders of the known world. It was commissioned by Charles IV and laid out by Peter Parléř, one of the original architects of St. Vitus Cathedral. The Baroque statues that lend the bridge its unique character date from the 17th century. The stark religious imagery was the work of the conquering Hapsburgs and represents their attempt to re-Catholicize the stubbornly Protestant Czechs. Before crossing the bridge, stop first to admire the Old Town Bridge Tower (Staroměstská mostecká věž). The eastern side of the tower, facing the Old Town, shows the original facade of the coats of arms of the Bohemian kings and the Holy Roman Empire. The western side was damaged in battle by Swedish troops at the end of the Thirty Years' War. If you're up for a climb, there's a picture-perfect view of the bridge waiting for you at the top. Most of the 30 or so statues that line the bridge are reproductions. Not all are considered artistic masterpieces, but each has a story to tell. The statue of the Bronze Crucifix (third on the right) is the oldest on the bridge and stands on a spot once occupied by a wooden crucifix. Legend has it the Hebrew inscription that reads HOLY, HOLY, HOLY GOD was

Karlova street.

Charles Bridge.

forcibly paid for by an unknown Jew who had mocked the crucifix. The statue of St. John of Nepomuk (eighth on the right) is the most popular. He was allegedly tossed from this bridge and drowned; touching his relief on the statue (now shiny gold) is said to bring good luck. Art critics judge the statue of St. Luitgarde kissing Christ's wounds (12th on the left), done by Baroque master Matthias Braun, as the most valuable. 🕘 ***45 min. 60 Kč (to climb the Old Town Bridge Tower).***

St. Nicholas Church in Malá Strana (not to be confused with the church of the same name in Old Town Square).

12 Kids **Bohemia Bagel.** There are several places within easy reach of this side of the Charles Bridge to have a full course meal with all the trimmings (see chapter 6), but if you're just looking for a quick and easy sandwich or bowl of soup, try this local branch of the Prague-wide Bohemia Bagel chain. Very good bagels with the standard toppings, or American-style sandwiches (steak and cheese, chicken salad) served on bagels, baguettes, or focaccia bread. Soups are often vegetarian and made fresh daily. They serve excellent full-course breakfasts until late morning. *Lázenská 19.* ☎ *220-806-590. $*

13 **Lesser Town Square (Malostranské nám.).** Walk below the Lesser Town Towers

(Malostranské mostecké věže), noting the smaller tower on the left. It was built in the 12th century and actually predates the bridge itself. Mostecká is the picturesque street that leads you to the focal point of the Lesser Town, Malostranské náměstí. There's not much to see here, but the square continues to function as an important transportation junction. 🕘 *10 min.*

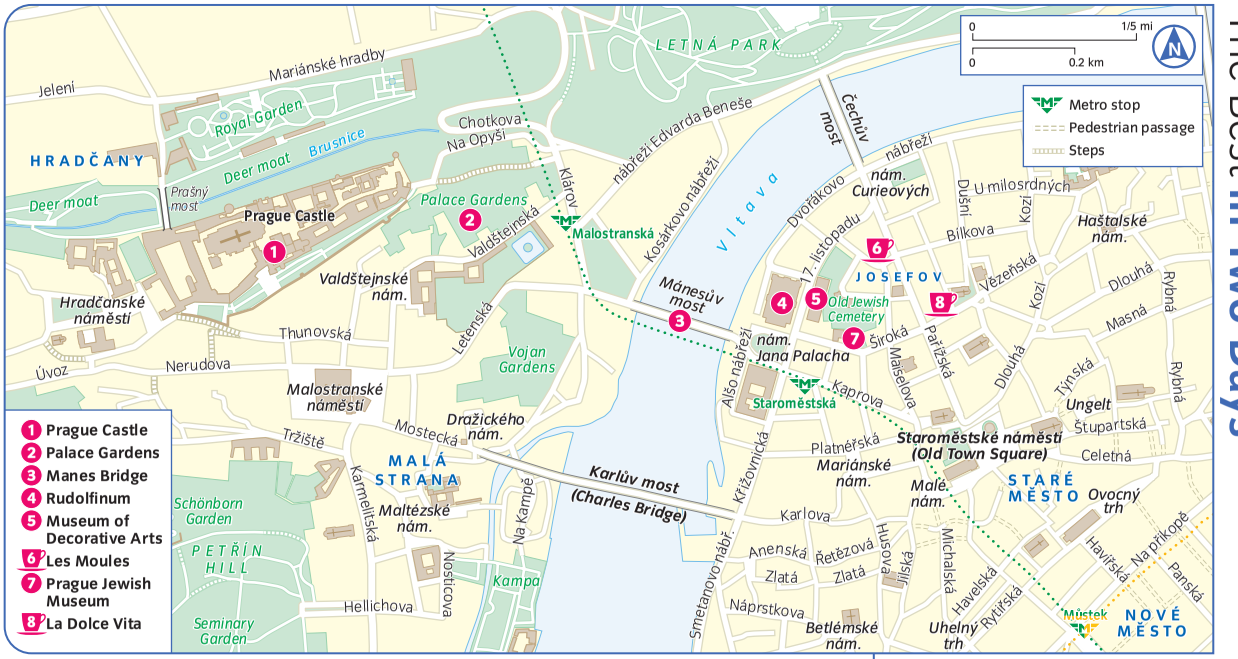
14 ★★ St. Nicholas Church (Kostel sv. Mikuláše). This 18th-century church, the work of Killian Dienzenhofer and his son, is considered a masterpiece of high Baroque. In general, Czechs tend to favor Gothic over Baroque, associating the latter with the Austrian Hapsburg occupation, but nearly everyone loves this church. The voluptuous marble columns, the statues, and the frescoes are over the top in almost every way, but the exuberant interior somehow works. The exterior dome is especially lovely when viewed from the Charles Bridge. The church is one of the better venues for concerts. 🕘 *20 min. Malostranské nám. 1.* ☎ *257-534-215. 50 Kč. Daily 9am–5pm.*

15 ★ Nerudová. From St. Nicholas Church, follow this street uphill for the trek to Prague Castle. The street takes its name from Czech author Jan Neruda, who was born here in the 19th century. The Nobel prize–winning Chilean poet Pablo Neruda so admired Jan Neruda's writings that he adopted "Neruda" as a pen name. The street is lined with stunning Baroque palaces. Many have been given cute descriptive names. The house at no. 12, for example, is "The House of the Three Violins" (U tří housliček). My favorite is no. 11: "The House of the Red Lamb" (U červeného beránka). 🕘 *20 min.*

Fighting giant statues atop Prague Castle's main entrance gate.

16 ★★★ Prague Castle (Pražský hrad). At the top of Nerudová are steps leading to Prague Castle. The castle complex, including the Royal Palace and St. Vitus Cathedral, has been the seat of political and religious authority in the Czech lands for nearly as long as there have been Czech lands. Unless you've jogged the entire Royal Route, it's unlikely that you'll have the time to make a full tour. Instead, save a more in-depth exploration of the castle for Day 2 (see the tour starting on p 30), and just take a peek inside to get your bearings. If this is your only chance to see the castle area, be sure check out St. Vitus. Entry into the cathedral is free. 🕘 *30 min.*

The Best in Two Days



The one-day tour of Prague was all about covering ground. This second-day tour is more about drilling down and focusing on the city's two world-class attractions: Prague Castle (Pražský hrad) and the Prague Jewish Museum (Židovské muzeum v Praze). Both tend to attract hordes of visitors, but are well worth any minor inconvenience. The tour is set up to begin at the castle and move across the river to the Jewish Museum, but it can easily be done in reverse. The important thing is to get an early start and don't try to push too hard. Budget a half-day for each and reward yourself with a nice lunch in between. This walk can easily be combined with the neighborhood tours of the Castle District (Hradčany) and the former Jewish Quarter (Josefov) described in chapter 3, but bear in mind that the more you tack on, the more time you'll need to finish.

START: Hradčanské nám. in front of the main castle entrance.

1 ★★★ Prague Castle (Pražský hrad). The Prague Castle complex includes both the Royal Palace (Královský pálac), the residence of the early kings, and St. Vitus Cathedral (Chrám sv. Víta), the country's spiritual center. You can wander the castle grounds and enter St. Vitus for free, but to fully explore the major attractions and see the royal crypts and tower at St. Vitus, you need to buy a combined entry ticket. Two types of tickets—full-price and reduced admission—are available; which to choose depends on the amount of time you have and your level of interest. Both tickets are valid for the major attractions, including the Royal Palace, St. Vitus Cathedral, St. George's Basilica (Kostel sv. Jiří), and Golden Lane (Zlatá ulička). A full-price ticket also includes the Prague Castle Picture Gallery (Obrazárna Pražského hradu) and a special permanent exhibition in the Royal Palace titled "The Story of Prague Castle." If you're not well versed in the ups and downs of Czech history, consider renting a portable headset "audioguide." The English-language commentary runs long but provides badly needed context. For help navigating the castle, see the Prague Castle tour on p 30. *3 hr. Hradčanské nám. 224-372-423. www.hrad.cz. Full admission 350 Kč adults, 175 Kč children, 500 Kč family; reduced admission 250 Kč adults, 125 Kč children, 300 Kč family. Audioguide 300 Kč (full day), 250 Kč (2 hr). Daily Apr–Oct*

Stained glass window in St. Vitus Cathedral in the Prague Castle complex.

9am–6pm; Nov–Mar 9am–4pm. Metro: Malostranská (plus tram 22 or 23, two stops).

2 ★ Palace Gardens (Palácové zahrady). Exit the castle complex on the lower end, beyond the Dalibor tower, and find the entrance to these five interconnected Baroque gardens that run downhill toward Malá Strana. One admission price gives you entry into all five gardens. The gardens are more fully described in the tour "The Gardens of Malá Strana" on p 90. Make your way downhill and exit on Valdštejnská. *45 min. 257-010-401. 79 Kč. Apr–Oct daily 10am–8pm.*

3 Manes Bridge (Manesův most). From Valdštejnská walk past the Malostranská metro station and cross the Vltava River via this modern bridge. The Manes Bridge has nothing on the Charles Bridge in terms of beauty, but it provides a nice perspective on the impressive length of the Charles Bridge, which is quite a structure given the engineering limitations of the 14th century. *20 min.*

4 Rudolfinum. Standing on your left as you leave the Manes Bridge on the Old Town side, the neo-Renaissance Rudolfinum is the leading concert house in the Czech Republic and home to the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra (p 128). It's not normally open to the public for a look inside, but it's well worth trying to snag tickets to a performance. *10 min. Náměstí Jana Palacha. 227-059-227.*

5 ★★ Prague Museum of Decorative Arts (Uměleckoprůmyslové muzeum v Praze). If you have a little time before lunch and want a quick diversion, this often-overlooked museum across the street from the Rudolfinum is worth a detour. The collection covers applied arts from the 16th to the 20th century, but the strong suit is the collection of early-20th-century Cubist, Art Nouveau, and Art Deco jewels, glass, textiles, and posters. Also be sure to head upstairs to the Votive Hall (Votivní sál) to see a set of 14th-century silver ornaments that were discovered hidden in the walls of Karlštejn Castle. The museum has a great if small gift shop and a popular onsite cafe that's a lifesaver when you're starting to wear down. *45 min. 17. listopadu 2. 251-093-111. 80 Kč. Daily 10am–6pm.*

The Rudolfinum.

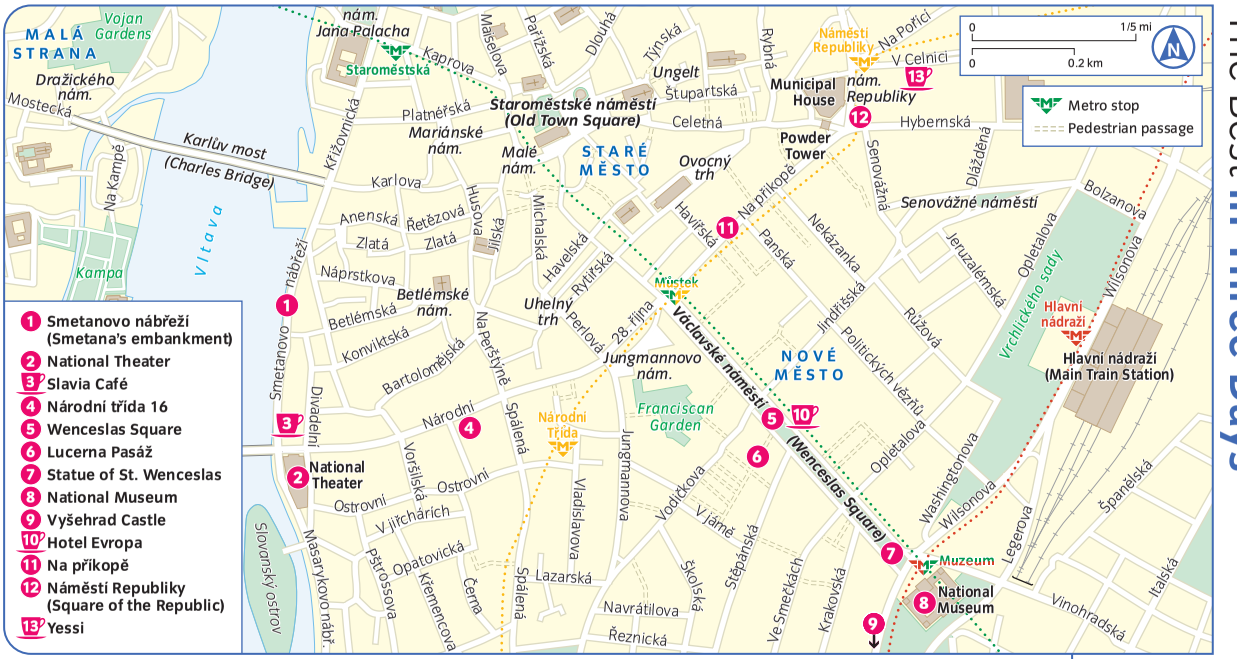
The Old Jewish Cemetery.

6 **Les Moules.** Before tackling the Jewish museum, have lunch at this Belgian-style bistro just around the corner from the museum's entrance. The specialty is mussels, but there are plenty of decent pork and steak entrees. Good Belgian beer on tap (and, naturally, excellent Czech beer as well). ***Pařížská 19.*** ☎ ***222-315-022. $$.***

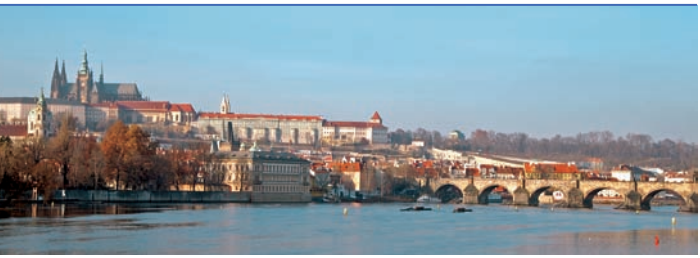
7 ★★★ **Prague Jewish Museum (Židovské muzeum v Praze).** After Prague Castle, this is arguably the second most important tourist attraction in town. The Jewish Museum is a collection of surviving synagogues and the Old Jewish Cemetery (Starý židovský hřbitov) that date from the 15th to the 19th century, when Jews were forced to live in this tiny parcel just north of Old Town Square. The city of Prague cleared the Jewish Quarter and razed most of the buildings at the end of the 19th century after it had become a slum. Each of the four synagogues (Maisel, Pinkas, Klaus, and Spanish) has a separate exhibition on Jewish life, but the real highlight is the somber but spiritual Old Jewish Cemetery, crammed with some 12,000 tombstones. A combined entry ticket gets you into the museum's four synagogues, plus the cemetery and the adjoining Ceremonial Hall. A separate ticket is required to visit the Old New Synagogue, the oldest still-functioning Jewish place of worship in Europe. For help navigating the Jewish Museum, see the Jewish Quarter tour on p 52. 🕘 ***3 hr. U Starého hřbitova 3a.*** ☎ ***222-317-191. www.jewishmuseum.cz. Jewish Museum 300 Kč adults, 200 Kč children; Old New Synagogue 200 Kč adults, 140 Kč children; combination ticket 480 Kč adults, 320 Kč children. Apr–Oct Sun–Fri 9am–6pm; Nov–Mar Sun–Fri 9am–4:30pm. Closed on Jewish holidays.***

8 **La Dolce Vita.** After a grueling but fascinating day of sightseeing, it's time to repair for some coffee and refreshments. This is a local favorite with the shoppers and shop clerks from fashionable Pařížská street, who come for the espresso, cakes, sandwiches, and the chance to chill out. ***Široká 15.*** ☎ ***224-226-546. $.***

The Best in Three Days



You can congratulate yourself at this point. If you've followed the previous days' tours, you've definitely hit the major sights, but what's missing is a feel for the modern city—that part of Prague life that takes place outside the tourist strongholds of the Old Town Square and Prague Castle. This tour is a grab bag—a little relaxing, a little shopping, and a little taste of the big city. **START: Staroměstská metro station.**



View from Smetanovo nábřeží.

1 ★ Smetanovo nábřeží. (Smetana's Embankment). From the metro station, find the tram stop on Křižovnická ul. and follow the street in the direction of the Charles Bridge. Pass the bridge and continue walking south, finding the sidewalk that takes you along the river. This is the Smetana embankment, named for Czech composer Bedřich Smetana, author of probably the best-known piece of Czech music outside the country: *The Moldau (Vltava).* This also happens to be the place for that killer photograph, the one with the Charles Bridge to the right and the castle above and behind. The best time to catch the view is mid-morning with the sun over your shoulder as you look out over the water. *20 min.*

2 ★ National Theater (Národní divadlo). Continue walking until you reach the main cross street, Národní. You can't miss this neo-Renaissance masterpiece of a theater, a symbol of Czech nationalism, dating from the late 19th century. The theater took decades to build, but when it finally opened in 1881, it was destroyed by fire after

The National Theater.

Wenceslas Square.

only 12 performances. It was quickly rebuilt and opened again in 1883. Smetana composed the opera *Libuše* for the occasion. It's still the leading theater in the country and maintains a rotating program of theater, opera, and dance. It's rarely open to the public, but try to get tickets for something here (p 126). 🕘 ***10 min. Národní třída 2.*** ☎ ***224-901-668.***

3 **Slavia Café.** Stop for coffee at this legendary dissident cafe that has the added advantage of a perfect view over the river toward Prague Castle. The Slavia was once a meeting point for Václav Havel and other dissident intellectuals from the theater and film worlds. At one point in the 1980s, half of the cafe would be filled with dissidents and the other half with secret police. Now it's mostly for tourists, but serves good coffee and light meals. ***Smetanovo náb. 2.*** ☎ ***224-218-493. $$.***

4 **Národní třída 16.** Stop here under an arcade to see a small plaque honoring the students who started the Velvet Revolution in 1989 that overthrew the communist government. The "Communist Prague" tour on p 38 goes into more detail, but it was at this point where the police stopped a group of student demonstrators on that fateful night of November 17, 1989. That marked the beginning of the end for the authorities, as the demonstrations each night grew bigger and bigger. Ultimately there were hundreds of thousands of protesters. 🕘 ***10 min. Národní třída 16.***

5 ★★ **Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí).** Follow Národní to the end and then along a pedestrian walk to the base of Wenceslas Square. After Old Town Square, this upwardly sloping boulevard is the most famous "square" in the city. It began life in the 14th century as Prague's horse market but has since evolved into the commercial heart of the city and also the symbolic center of the nation's conscience. Crowds have gravitated here to celebrate every milestone, or protest every defeat, for the past 200 years—independence from Austria in 1918, the Nazi occupation in 1939, the Soviet-led in invasion in 1968, the funeral for student martyr Jan Palach in 1969, and finally the Velvet Revolution in 1989. The square was built up in the 19th and 20th centuries and lacks the harmony of the Old Town Square. Nearly all of the fashions in vogue during this time can be seen here, from the neo-Renaissance National Museum at the top of the square to the turn-of-the-century Art Nouveau style of the Hotel Evropa (no. 25) and the functionalist style of the

1920s and 1930s (Bata shoe store, no 6). 🕘 *30 min. Václavské nám.*

6 ★★ Lucerna Pasáž. Walk up the square on the right-hand side. Fans of the 1920s and 1930s will love the retro styling of the Lucerna Pasáž shopping center, the most attractive of the many shopping arcades on both sides of the square. There's not much to buy here, but there are a number of interesting cafes, a 1920s-era cinema, and even a statue of St. Wenceslas riding on an upside-down horse hanging from the ceiling, courtesy of Czech artist David Černý. You can enter the Lucerna Pasáž from either Vodičkova or Štěpánská streets. 🕘 *15 min. Štěpánská 61.* ☎ *224-224-537.*

7 Statue of St. Wenceslas. At the top of the square stands the very equestrian statue that Černý was poking fun at. St. Wenceslas, a former Bohemian prince, is one of the patron saints of the Czech lands, and it was from the base of this statue that the proclamation of Czechoslovak statehood was first read out in 1918. Love it or loathe it, the statue plays a practical role as the most popular meeting spot in the city—if a Prague resident suggests that you meet "at the horse," this is where you should go. 🕘 *10 min.*

Statue of St. Wenceslas, with the National Museum in the background.

8 ★ National Museum (Národní Muzeum). Like the National Theater and the Rudolfinum, the construction of the National Museum was closely tied up in the Czech national revival movement of the 19th century. The stern neo-Renaissance facade was badly damaged in the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion when it was fired on by Russian troops. Today, the museum houses enormous collections of minerals, remnants from archaeological digs, folk costumes, pottery, coins, textiles, sheet music—nearly everything that a museum can collect. More interesting than the collections themselves perhaps is the enormous Pantheon interior. 🕘 *15 min to view the facade, 2 hr. to visit. Václavské*

Viewing the National Museum's elaborate interior might be worth the visit alone.

nám. 68. ☎ 224-497-111. 120 Kč. Daily May–Sept 10am–6pm; Oct–Apr 9am–5pm (closed every first Tues of the month).

9 ★★ **Vyšehrad Castle.** If it's a beautiful day and you feel like getting out of the city, skip the rest of the tour and instead hop the metro (C line) two stops south to the ruins of Vyšehrad Castle. Vyšehrad was the seat of the first Czech kings in the Přemyslid dynasty going back to before the turn of the first millennium. Legend has it that well over a thousand years ago, Princess Libuše (of Smetana opera fame) looked out over the Vltava river valley from this spot and predicted the founding of a great city. Today, the main fortifications remain on rocky cliffs, blocking out the noise and confusion from below. It's a perfect place to drop a blanket and have a picnic or just take the day off. The Vyšehrad Cemetery (Vyšehradský hřbitov) on the castle grounds is one of the most important in the country. It's the final resting place of composers Antonín Dvořák and Bedřich Smetana and Art Nouveau painter Alfons Mucha, among others. *Soběslavová 1. ☎ 241-410-348. www.praha-vysehrad.cz. No admission. Metro: Vyšehrad (plus a considerable walk).*

Hotel Evropa.

10 **Hotel Evropa.** If you decide not to head out to Vyšehrad Castle, continue the tour here. From the top of Wenceslas Square, turn back toward the lower end walking along the opposite side of the square. The cafe of this glorious Art Nouveau hotel is the perfect perch to take a break. In the summer, sit on the terrace; in winter, relax amid the turn-of-the-century splendors. It's the most ornate interior on the square, bar none. *Václavské nám. 68. ☎ 224-215-387. $.*

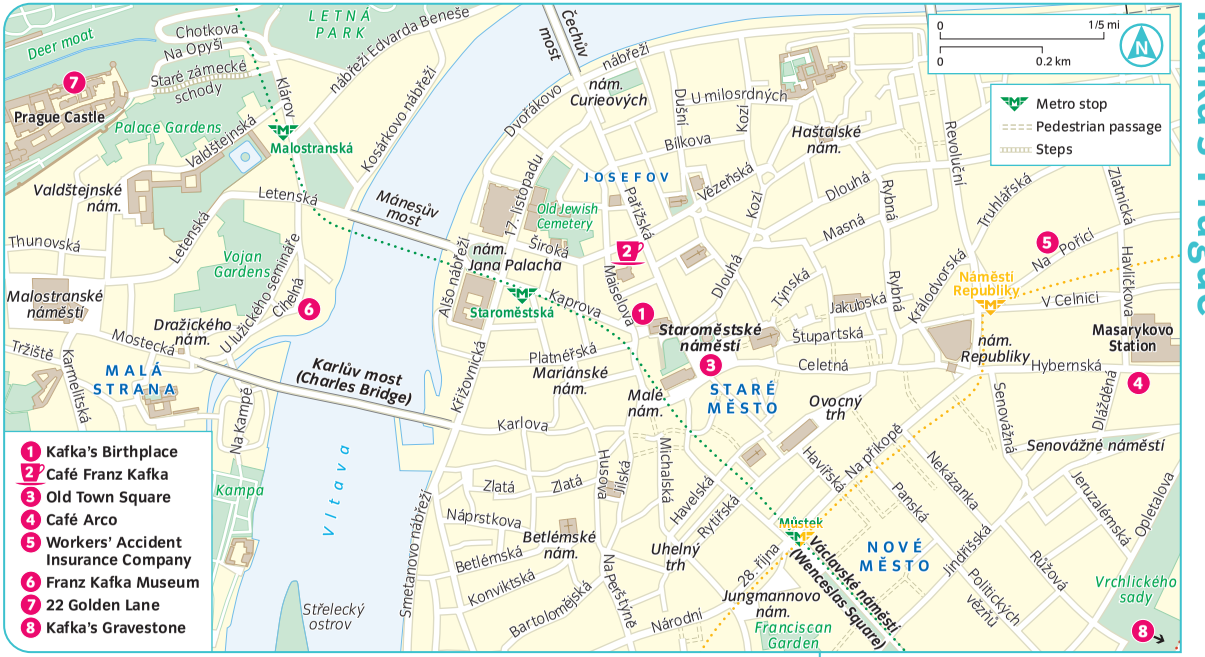
11 **Na příkopě.** Turn right at the bottom of Wenceslas Square onto the broad pedestrian street Na příkopě. The name of the street means "at the ditch," referring to a time when this street was a moat separating the Old Town (Staré Město) to the left from the New Town (Nové Město) to the right. Despite its humble name, today it commands some of the highest office-rental prices in Europe, and is home to some of the city's best shopping. 🕘 *20 min.*

12 **Náměstí Republiky (Square of the Republic).** Na příkopě leads to Náměstí Republiky and numerous tram and metro connections. Though Náměstí Republiky itself holds two of Prague's finest buildings (the Powder Tower and the Municipal House), it's an architectural potpourri that's never really worked as a public square. As this book was going to press, an enormous shopping mall, the Palladium, had just opened at the far end of the square. 🕘 *10 min.*

13 **Yessi.** The slogan at this sandwich shop/deli is "positive eating," meaning they use healthful, fresh ingredients. Excellent sandwiches, wraps, and a well-tended salad bar are nice ways to end a long walk. *V Celnici 4. ☎ 222-212-585. $.*

2 The Best **Special-Interest Tours**

Kafka's Prague



Previous page: *Detail of Vyšehrad Castle door.*

The former communist government was never entirely comfortable with Franz Kafka, the German-Jewish writer who was born here in 1883. Kafka's themes of bureaucracy and alienation were too close to the grim reality of day-to-day life of pre-1989 Prague, and Kafka was all but ignored by the powers that were. All of that changed after the Velvet Revolution, and a caricature of Kafka's familiar face—complete with his overly elongated ears—can be found on posters, T-shirts, and coffee mugs in every souvenir shop in town. Perhaps it's ironic that a somber German-Jewish intellectual—the father of the modern novel—should somehow be adopted by the tourist industry as one of the faces of new Prague. On the other hand, given the city's turbulent history of Nazi occupation followed by communist dictatorship, perhaps it's more than fitting. Kafka died fully 15 years before the start of World War II, but in retrospect, his novels seem eerily prophetic of what was to come. **START: Old Town Square (Staroměstské nám.).**

1 ★ Kafka's Birthplace. Just beside the St. Nicholas Church (Chrám sv. Mikuláše) stands the house where Kafka was born. At the time, the neighborhood was still pretty seedy, just on the edge of the then-Jewish ghetto. The actual house was destroyed by fire and the only element remaining is the impressive doorway. The plaque on the side of the house reads in Czech FRANZ KAFKA WAS BORN HERE ON JULY 3, 1883. Part of the house now holds a small permanent exhibition of Kafka's writings. The gift shop is better than the exhibition itself. 🕘 ***20 min. Expozice Franze Kafky. U radnice 5. No phone. 40 Kč. Daily 10am–6pm. Metro: Staroměstská.***

2 Café Franz Kafka. Perfectly in keeping with the Kafka theme, this little cafe around the corner from Kafka's birthplace feels almost like a shrine. They serve excellent coffee drinks and light food options like sandwiches and salads. The beautiful photos of old Prague on the wall will put you in the mood for a literary crawl. ***Široká 12. ☎ 222-318-945. $.***

3 ★★★ Old Town Square (Staroměstské nám.). Kafka spent many of his formative years on Old Town Square and the surrounding streets. Kafka's father, a haberdasher, married well, and the family was moving up the social ladder. One of their

This plaque marks Kafka's birthplace.

nicer apartments was at Staroměstské nám. 2 (the Renaissance house "U Minuty") just beside the Astronomical Clock. As a boy, Kafka attended the German grammar school across the square at the bright-pink Kinský Palace (Staroměstské nám. 12). His father ran a haberdashery in the same building (commemorated by a plaque on the courtyard wall). Later in his life, ill with tuberculosis, Kafka lived again with his family at Staroměstské nám. 5. Here he worked on probably his most famous book, *The Castle,* and several short stories. My favorite Kafka memorial is found at Staroměstské nám. 17, the former home of socialite Berta Fanta, who ran a weekly salon in her drawing room. A plaque on the house reads: HERE IN THIS SALON OF MRS. BERTA FANTA, ALBERT EINSTEIN, PROFESSOR AT PRAGUE UNIVERSITY IN 1911 TO 1912, FOUNDER OF THE THEORY OF RELATIVITY, NOBEL PRIZE WINNER, PLAYED THE VIOLIN AND MET HIS FRIENDS, FAMOUS WRITERS, MAX BROD AND FRANZ KAFKA. WOW. ◴ ***20 min. Metro: Staroměstská.***

Einstein plaque at Staroměstské nám.

4 ★ Café Arco. Leave the square walking down Celetná, passing another of the Kafka family residences at no. 2. Continue straight beyond the Powder Tower, following the street Hybernská to find the Café Arco. Unfortunately, little remains of this once-illustrious cafe, one of the centers of German-Jewish intellectual life in the early years of the 20th century. The Arco now houses a depressing cafeteria for police officers and some other random offices. It was also a favorite of Max Brod, Kafka's faithful friend and the man arguably most responsible for Kafka's posthumous fame. On his death, Franz Kafka asked that his writings be destroyed. Brod instead cobbled them together, edited them, and sought out a publisher. The rest is literary history. The Arco was not the only cafe Kafka frequented. He occasionally favored the Café Louvre at Národní třída 22 and the now-defunct Café Continental at Na příkopě 17. ◴ ***10 min. Hybernská 16. ☎ 974-863-542. Metro: Náměstí Republiky.***

5 ★★ The former Workers' Accident Insurance Company. Franz Kafka lived a double life. By night he was the consummate haunted intellectual, scribbling about alienation and the modern condition. By day, he was a mild-mannered claims adjuster for the insurance company that once stood at Na poříčí 7. The original building still exists, but today houses the Mercure Hotel. Kafka's office was located where room 214 now stands, and the receptionist will happily show you the room if it's empty. Real fans can book the room for the night, but it's not much different from any other room. ◴ ***15 min. Hotel Mercure. Na poříčí 7. ☎ 221-800-800. Metro: Náměsti Republiky.***

6 ★★★ Franz Kafka Museum. The tour picks up across the river in Malá Strana. The easiest way to get here is to catch the metro at Náměstí Republiky (Line B), changing lines at Mustek (Line A) and continuing to Malostranská. From Malostranská

Photograph of Franz Kafka.

Kafka once lived in this blue house at 22 Golden Lane.

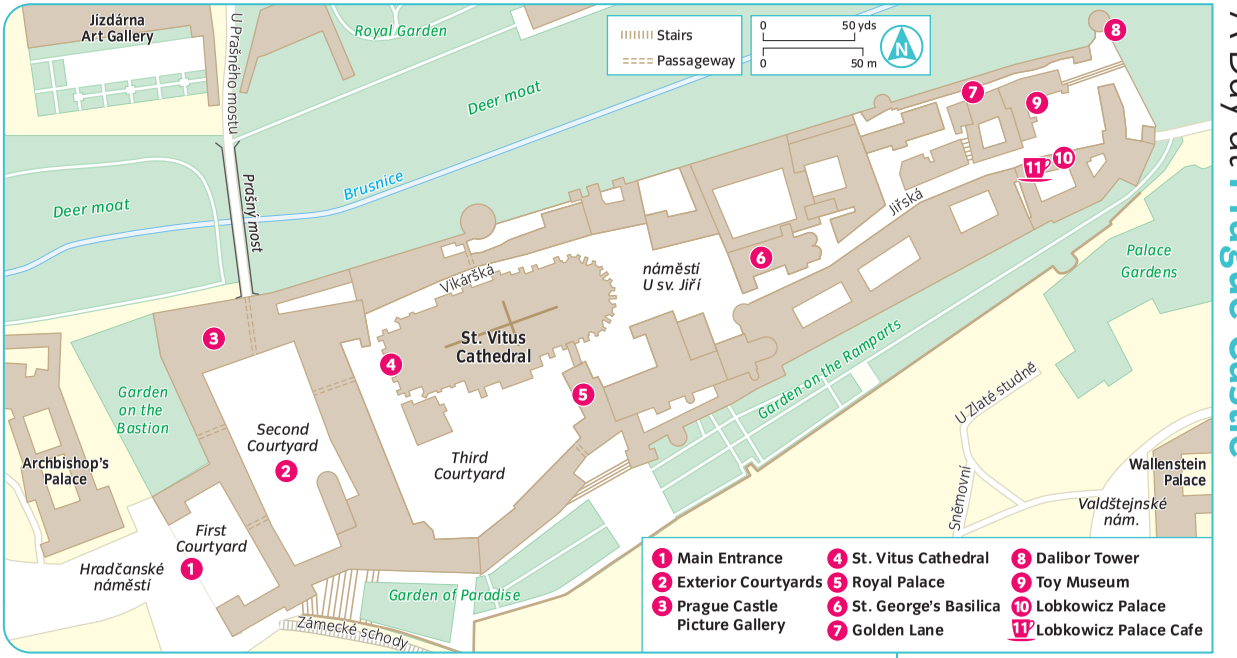
station, the Kafka Museum is about a 10-minute walk. This relatively new museum is a more serious treatment of Kafka's life and works than the exhibition at Kafka's birthplace (see above). The museum has two sections, one focusing on the influence of Prague on Kafka's work and the other a video display of Kafka's Prague. 🕘 ***1 hr. Hergetova Cihelná. Cihelná 2b. ☎ 257-535-507. 120 Kč. Daily 10am–6pm. Metro: Malostranská.***

7 ★ 22 Golden Lane (Zlatá ulička 22). The next stop is within the Prague Castle complex on a tiny street that once housed castle artisans. From the Kafka museum, you can return to the Malostranská metro station and then hike up the steps that lead up to the castle from the right of the station—though it's best to combine your visit here with a full castle tour (see "A Day at Prague Castle," below) since the admission price to Golden Lane is included in the ticket. Kafka's sister rented this tiny room from 1916 to 1917 and allowed her brother to live and work here for a time. During the early years of the 20th century, Golden Lane was a kind of eclectic Bohemian ghetto filled with eccentrics and creative types. Now it's mostly T-shirt and glass shops. There's a small gift shop here and a tiny marker on the house that states in Czech: FRANZ KAFKA LIVED HERE. 🕘 ***30 min. Zlatá ulička 22. Hradčany. Metro: Malostranská (plus tram 22 or 23, two stops).***

8 ★★★ Kafka's Gravestone. Kafka died in 1924 at a sanatorium in Vienna of tuberculosis. He was only 41 years old. He's buried in the New Jewish Cemetery in the Prague suburb of Strašnice. From Malostranská or Hradčanská metro stations take the A line to Želivského. From here it's just a short walk to the cemetery and signs will point you along the way to sector 21, where Kafka's grave marker stands. "Dr. Franz Kafka" is buried under a simple white stone along with his parents, Hermann and Julie Kafka. A small plaque below is dedicated to Kafka's three sisters, all of whom died in Nazi concentration camps during World War II. 🕘 ***30 min. New Jewish Cemetery (Nový židovský hřbitov). Metro: Želivského.***

Kafka's gravestone, in the New Jewish Cemetery.

A Day at Prague Castle



Touring Prague Castle can be a bewildering proposition. First there's the sheer size. It's the largest castle complex in the world. Then there's the fact that the historical events and personalities behind the buildings are not well known to most visitors. You may have some dim recollection of Charles IV or Rudolf II from a past European History class, but what about Adalbert or Sigismund or the Přemyslid dynasty? Still, the castle complex—which includes St. Vitus Cathedral, the Royal Palace, St. George's Basilica, Golden Lane, and other major sights—is such a treasure-trove of art, architecture, jewels, tombs, and jaw-dropping views that it's well worth the effort. Be sure to leave yourself at least good half a day to do it justice. See the box "Prague Castle: Practical Matters," later in this chapter, for ticket information. **START: Hradčanské nám.**

1 ★ Main entrance. The main entry to the castle complex, fronting Hradčanské náměstí, was built to impress. Note the oversized gates and imposing statues of the Battling Titans above. Two guards stand watch and every hour on the hour there's a ritual changing of the guard. Feel free to stand alongside for a photo—the guards are trained not to pay attention but sometimes their eyes stray. ◴ *15 min.*

2 Exterior courtyards. Proceed through the main gate (entry is free) and walk into the First Castle Courtyard (První hradní nádvoří), passing through another impressive entryway—the Matthias Gate (Matyášova brána)—into the Second Castle Courtyard (Druhé hradní nádvoří). As you go through the Matthias Gate, look to the right to see the offices of the Czech presidency (closed to the public). Both the first and second courtyards, which reflect the formal tastes of the 18th-century Austrian aristocracy, are on the bland side. ◴ *10 min.*

3 ★ Prague Castle Picture Gallery (Obrazárna Pražského hradu). The entrance to the gallery lies to the left as you enter the second courtyard. We can only imagine the treasures it once held as the court gallery for Rudolf II. Unfortunately, the holdings were plundered in the Thirty Years' War, and those scattered pictures that survived, more often than not, were carted off to galleries in Vienna. A few masterpieces remain, including works by court favorites Hans von Aachen and Bartholomeus Spranger. ◴ *30*

Prague Castle Picture Gallery.

min. ☎ 224-373-531. Entry is included in the full-price ticket to the castle complex. Separate admission is 150 Kč. Daily Apr–Oct 9am–6pm; Nov–Mar 9am–4pm.

4 ★★★ St. Vitus Cathedral (Chrám sv. Víta). Follow the small entryway that leads to the Third Castle Courtyard (Třetí hradní nádvoří) and prepare for a shock—an enormous Gothic cathedral squeezed in among the castle walls. It's hard to exaggerate the importance of St. Vitus Cathedral to the national identity, even if the Czechs are not considered overly religious. Construction began in 1344 on order of Charles IV, but the cathedral was not finished until 1929. In addition to serving as the center of the Catholic Church, the cathedral's crypts hold the remains of the land's most famous rulers, including Charles IV and Rudolf II. Each of the chapels that line the sides of the church seems to hold yet another legend dear to the hearts of Czechs. Leave at least an hour to tour the cathedral and the crypts. Entry to the cathedral is free, though you'll need to buy a full castle admission to see the Royal Crypt or climb the South Tower.

St. Vitus Cathedral.

The entrance to the cathedral is through the left-hand door at the front and foot traffic moves clockwise once inside. The left side of the front half of the church is lined with small chapels—the most interesting one being the third, with its stained-glass windows painted by the Czech Art Nouveau master Alfons Mucha. Farther along on the left-hand side are the confessionals and, above, an organ loft with an amazing 18th-century organ. As you move deeper into the church, you enter the older section. Here the chapels hold the remains of some of the earliest rulers of the Czech lands, going back nearly 1,000 years. As you proceed around the back, you come to the gaudy, silver sarcophagus of St. John of Nepomuk, a jarring Baroque contrast to the more subdued Gothic of much of the rest of the church. Just beyond this, you'll find the stairs leading underground to the Royal Crypt (Královská krypta), holding the remains of, among others, Charles IV and his four wives, as well as Rudolf II, Wenceslas IV, and King George of Poděbrady. Back up on the main level, you'll see steps—287 in all—leading up to the South Tower lookout gallery. It's a slow, arduous climb, but well worth it for some amazing views over the Old Town and Malá Strana. Back on ground level in the cathedral, heading toward the exit, you find the most beautiful of all the 22 side chapels, the Chapel of St. Wenceslas (Svatováclavská kaple). Wenceslas—immortalized as a "king" in Christmas carols—was in fact an early Christian prince who was killed by his power-hungry brother Boleslav in A.D. 935. He was canonized soon

thereafter. The chapel is considered the spiritual heart of the cathedral and was built over Wenceslas's tomb. Access to the chapel is restricted, but notice the inlaid jewels that cover the walls and altar. A doorway at the back leads to the Crown Chamber and the repository of the Bohemian crown jewels (not open to the public). 🕘 ***60 min***.

5 ★★★ Royal Palace (Královský pálac). The entrance to the Royal Palace lies to the right of the cathedral facing the front of the church. Until the 16th century this was the main residence of the castle complex. The chief sight here is the enormous Vladislav Hall (Vladislavský sál), noted for its size and its rib-vaulted ceilings—the work of celebrated late Gothic architect Benedikt Ried. At the time it was a tremendous technical feat to have an enclosed room of this size without supporting pillars. Over the centuries, the room has hosted jousting matches, coronations, feasts of all kinds, and in modern times the inaugurations of Czech presidents. At the end of the Vladislav Hall a door leads to the Ludwig Wing, the site of the infamous 1618 defenestration of two Catholic governors and their secretary that led to the carnage of the Thirty Years' War. Also here is the Old Diet (Stará Sněmovná), the former court where the king would meet with the high representatives of the church on one side and the nobility on the other. 🕘 ***45 min. Entry to the Royal Palace is included in both the full- & reduced-price Castle admissions.***

6 ★★ St. George's Basilica (Kostel sv. Jiří). Just down from the Royal Palace, you can't miss the simplicity of St. George's Basilica, Prague's oldest surviving Romanesque building dating from the 10th century. After the opulence of St. Vitus Cathedral, St. George's appears positively quaint and welcoming. The main sights here are the building itself and the tomb of St. Ludmila, the grandmother of

The Riding Hall at Royal Palace.

St. George's Basilica.

History 101: Prague Castle

Prague Castle has been at the center of political and religious authority throughout the history of the Czech lands. Archaeological finds indicate there's been a castle on this site since the 9th century, and the complex of royal residences, monasteries, and churches was built up and added to piecemeal over the years. The high point came in the 14th century during the reign of Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, who made the castle his Imperial residence. He rebuilt the Royal Palace and began work on St. Vitus Cathedral, emulating the best of French Gothic cathedrals of the day. The castle's fortunes waxed and waned with the fate of the Czech lands, falling into ruin during the Hussite wars of the 15th century, then returning to glory during the reign of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II at the turn of the 17th century. The defenestration at Prague Castle in 1618—when a group of Protestant noblemen pushed two Catholic governors from a high window and onto a dung heap below—sparked a religious conflagration that spread throughout Europe: the Thirty Years' War. The castle complex languished during the 300 years of Hapsburg occupation until 1918, but once again became the seat of power with the founding of independent Czechoslovakia at the end of World War I. During World War II, the Nazi ruler of Bohemia and Moravia, Reinhard Heydrich, took up residency here. Today the castle serves as the official residence of Czech presidents, though Václav Havel, a modest man, never felt comfortable amid the ostentatious splendor. He preferred his more modest villa in the Prague suburb of Střešovice.

St. Wenceslas. Next to the basilica is the St. George Convent, the oldest convent in the country and now housing a permanent exhibition of Czech Gothic art. 🕘 *30 min. Entry to St. George's Basilica is included in both the full- & reduced-price Castle admissions. Entry to St George's Convent & the museum is included in the full-price ticket only. Separate admission is 100 Kč.*

7 ★★ Golden Lane (Zlatá ulička). The ramshackle houses here on this street are impossibly tiny—usually simple one- or two-room abodes, without anything like a kitchen or a bathroom to make them livable. Nonetheless, they housed the castle guards in the 16th century and continued to function as more or less normal dwellings up until the 20th century. Franz Kafka was perhaps the most famous resident, living for a short time at no. 22 (See the tour "Kafka's Prague," above). Now the lane looks like nothing more than a film set. The houses have been converted to gift shops, selling the usual collection of glass, books, and T-shirts. 🕘 *20 min. Entry to Golden Lane is included in both the full- & reduced-price Castle admissions. Separate admission is 50 Kč.*

8 Dalibor Tower (Daliborka). Continuing on down toward the end of the complex brings you to a tower that once held the castle's prison. Dalibor, one of the first prisoners here, was a nobleman accused of leading a popular revolt in the 15th century. He apparently learned to play the violin while imprisoned here, and according to legend, the citizens of Prague would gather round to listen to him play. The music stopped in 1498 with his execution. 🕘 *10 min.*

9 Toy Museum (Muzeum hraček). Walking through a series of doorways and exit signs takes you to a small courtyard that houses a cafe and this toy museum, housed in what was once the Supreme Burgrave, the seat of the castle administration. Younger children will enjoy this collection of traditional toys, including classic dolls, wooden figures, and trains. The most valuable item is a 2,000-year-old doll from ancient Greece. Note that this is one of the few attractions within the castle complex not included within the general admission price. Nice to know before you've hiked the three flights of stairs to the ticket office. 🕘 *30 min. Jiřská 6.* ☎ *224-372-294. 60 Kč. Daily 9:30am–5pm.*

10 ★★ Lobkowicz Palace. Just outside the courtyard, this former 16th-century residence of the noble Lobkowicz family now houses a private exhibition called "The Princely

Lobkowicz Palace and Dalibor Tower.

Prague Castle: Practical Matters

Entry into the Castle grounds and St. Vitus Cathedral is free, but to tour the Royal Palace and to see the other major sights, including the Royal Crypts at St. Vitus, requires a ticket. Buy tickets at the Prague Castle Information Center located in the second courtyard after you pass through the main gates. Two types of tickets are available. Full-price admission (350 Kč adults, 175 Kč children, 500 Kč family) gets you into the Royal Palace, the Royal Crypt and South Tower of St. Vitus Cathedral, St. George's Basilica and Convent, Golden Lane, the Prague Castle Picture Gallery, and a special permanent exhibition in the Royal Palace titled "The Story of Prague Castle." A reduced admission (250 Kč adults, 125 Kč children, 300 Kč family) includes only the Royal Palace, the St. Vitus sights, St. George's Basilica, and Golden Lane. The reduced admission is sufficient if you have only a couple of hours. English guides are available for 100 Kč per person. If you'd rather explore on your own, rent a small "audioguide," a hand-held recording that takes you to about 50 sights in the Cathedral and the Castle. The commentary, available in several languages, is a little on the long side (you can fast-forward through the slow parts), but adds much-needed context. Audioguides cost 250 Kč for 2 hours, and 300 Kč all day. One or two audioguides is sufficient to share among a small group. Hradčanské náměstí. ☎ **224-372-423.** Open daily April to October from 9am to 6pm, November to March from 9am to 4pm. Metro: Malostranská (plus tram 22 or 23, two stops).

Collections," highlighting the family's eclectic holdings of paintings, sheet music, rare books, and arms. The paintings include works by Brueghel the Elder and Velázquez, among others. Entry is not included in the castle admission price. 🕘 ***60 min. Jiřská 3. ☎ 602-595-998. 275 Kč (adults), 175 Kč (children 5–15). Daily 10:30am–6pm.***

Lobkowicz Palace Cafe. By this time, you'll be long overdue for coffee or a snack. Even if you don't visit the palace, stop by the courtyard cafe just to the right of the palace entrance. The castle area is not generally known for good or reasonably priced refreshments. Here, the prices are just as high as elsewhere, but the soups, sandwiches, and wraps are freshly made, and you may even be serenaded by palace musicians. ***Jiřská 3. ☎ 602-595-998. $$.***

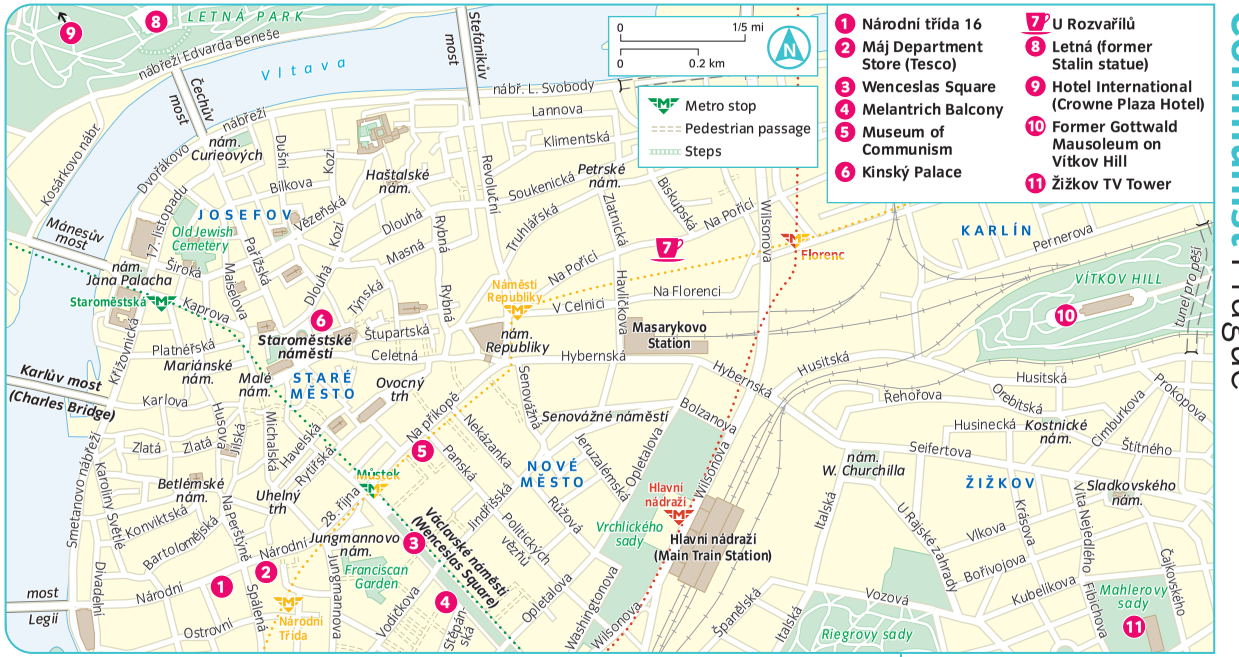
Finish the tour by hiking downhill in the direction of Malá Strana. Steps take you down to near the Malostranská metro station. Or if you've got some daylight left, spend time admiring the beautiful castle gardens that surround the complex on both the north and south sides.

German troops marching through the Prague castle gates in 1938, during their invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Modern Art off the Beaten Path

★★ **Veletržní palace,** the National Gallery's collection of modern and contemporary art, is housed on several floors of a restored functionalist building in the outlying district of Holešovice, at Dukelských hrdinů 47 (☎ **224-301-024;** www.ngprague.cz). This was originally hoped to be Prague's version of Paris's Centre Pompidou or New York's MoMA, but it's still a ways off. For one thing, the scruffy Holešovice locale doesn't quite gel. Still, the collection has many high points, including works by Monet, Renoir, Van Gogh, Matisse, Schiele, Klimt, and Picasso, among others. The fascinating 1920s building was designed by architects Josef Fuchs and Oldrich Tyl. When it was done, Swiss Modern master Le Corbusier famously commented it was interesting but not quite "architecture." Partial admissions are available if you're interested in seeing only one floor or one collection. Allow at least an hour for a visit. Full admission is 250 Kč. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 6pm. The closest Metro stop is Vltavská.

Communist Prague



Walking around this colorful and lively city today, it's hard to believe that less than 2 decades ago the Czech Republic was part of the "Eastern Bloc" and the "Warsaw Pact"—as grey and "Soviet" as Leonid Brezhnev's ashen face. Happily, those days are long gone, but a few interesting relics remain scattered around the city as a reminder of those bad old days. This tour begins by following the trail of the moving 1989 student protest known as the Velvet Revolution that peacefully ended 40 years of Communist rule. The start of the tour is easy to walk, and each sight follows closely from the previous one. The last three stops on the tour, though, are more spread out. You may want to choose one or two of the destinations and leave the others for another day. **START: Národní 16, Metro to Národní třída (Line B).**

1 ★★ Národní třída 16. This address on one of the city's major arteries, Národní třída (National Avenue), near the intersection with Mikulandská ul., marks the spot where the Velvet Revolution began and Czechoslovak Communism was finally defeated. On the night of November 17, 1989, a group of students and activists—encouraged by anti-Communist revolutions elsewhere in Eastern Europe and tired of 40 years of repressive rule here—assembled near the Vltava river and began marching up Národní on their way to Wenceslas Square. The group got as far as this building at no. 16—now memorialized by a simple plaque—before police confronted them and tried to drive them back. It's not clear what really happened that night (there was even a rumor—later disproved—that one of the students, Martin Šmíd, had been killed), but word of the confrontation quickly spread across the country, sparking weeks of huge demonstrations. By the end of the year, the Communists had capitulated and the revolution's spiritual hero, the dissident playwright Václav Havel, was president. *15 min. Národní třída 16, Prague 1. Metro: Národní třída.*

Velvet revolution marker.

2 Máj Department Store (Tesco). Walk down Národní třída a couple of blocks toward Wenceslas Square to the intersection with Spalená ul. When this department store was built in the mid-1970s, the building's "love it or loathe it" Brutalist architecture was hailed as a high point of Communist-era design. Brutalism was a popular international style that emphasized exposing a building's inner workings (like pipes and ducts) on the outside. The architects modeled the building on Paris's Centre Georges Pompidou, but there's little resemblance. Critics later derided Brutalism as hideously ugly (the world's most vocal critic was probably Britain's Prince

Soviet troops invading Prague in August 1968 to crush the "Prague Spring" reform.

Charles, who famously labeled Brutalist buildings "carbuncles.") A couple of years ago, the current owner, the British retailer Tesco, announced plans to knock the building down and start over. Fans of communist architecture then complained, and now the building—much like the Charles Bridge and the Old Town's Astronomical Clock—is an officially protected cultural landmark. ◴ ***10 min. Národní třída 26, Prague 1. Metro: Národní třída.***

3 ★★ Wenceslas Square (Václavské nám.). Continue walking along Národní třída to one of the biggest and best-known squares in Prague. Wenceslas Square has always found itself at the heart of turbulent times. At the end of World War I, thousands gathered here to demand independence from Austria-Hungary; in the run-up to World War II, thousands more came here to protest the Nazi occupation. The tradition continued during the Velvet Revolution. Night after night in those heady days of November 1989, hundreds of thousands of Czechs (and Slovaks) came here to voice their opposition to the Communist regime and to jangle their keys (a way of telling their geriatric overlords it was time to leave).

About three-quarters of the way up the square, just below the statue of the horseman, you'll find a small monument (often strewn with flowers) to the "Victims of Communism." You'll also see plaques marking the memory of two Czech students, Jan Palach and Jan Zajíc, who immolated themselves at separate times in 1969 to protest the Soviet-led invasion of the country a year earlier. That invasion, in August 1968, devastated Czechoslovakia and put a bitter end to a period of hope and political reform known as the "Prague Spring." It ushered in 20 more years of dreary, Soviet-style Communism. ◴ ***45 min. Václavské nám., Prague 1. Metro: Mustek.***

4 ★ Melantrich Balcony. Just opposite the memorial to the Victims of Communism, at no. 36 Wenceslas Square (now a branch of the British Marks & Spencer store), you will see a balcony jutting from the Melantrich publishing house. This is where, in late November 1989, the dissident playwright (and soon to be president) Václav Havel made his first historic appearances in front of the hundreds of thousands of people who were clamoring for his leadership. His mumbling yet defiant speeches solidified his

position as the popular choice to guide Czechoslovakia out of those dark days. On at least one famous occasion, Alexander Dubček—the popular, ousted leader of the "Prague Spring" reforms—joined Havel on the balcony. By then, Dubček was an old man and had been out of the spotlight for 20 years, but the crowds cheered him on anyway. 🕘 ***10 min. Václavské nám. 36, Prague 1. Metro: Mustek.***

5 ★★★ Museum of Communism. Walk back to the bottom of Wenceslas Square and follow the pedestrian street Na příkopě that leads off to the right. You'll find the "Museum of Communism" a couple of blocks down in a small passageway next to a McDonald's restaurant. Leave it to an American to find a way of making money from Communism. For years after 1989 there was no museum or central focal point to remember the 40 years of Soviet domination here, and in 2001 American entrepreneur Glenn Spicker and his partners decided to fill the gap with this overly commercial effort. The museum is stuffed with kitschy displays of Communist-era apartments and grocery stores, but the entry hall has an excellent series of wall posters explaining the major events of the Communist period, from the 1948 Communist coup, to the stagnation of the 1950s, the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion, and finally the 1989 Velvet Revolution. It's a great primer for recent history. The best part is a moving, 15-minute film loop (with English subtitles) mixing images of the Velvet Revolution with Czech folk songs. 🕘 ***1 hr. Na příkopě 10.*** ☎ ***224-212-966. Admission Kč 180. Daily 9am–9pm. Metro: Mustek.***

6 ★ Kinský Palace. Follow the little street, Havířská, that leads off Na příkopě in the direction of Old Town Square. This lively Baroque palace, at no. 12 on Old Town Square, is normally highlighted in guidebooks as the biggest and pinkest of the square's many palaces (and the site of Franz Kafka's grammar school), but it has another distinction related to the country's Communist past. It was from this balcony in February 1948 that the country's first Communist leader, Klement Gottwald, proclaimed an effective coup d'état by Communist forces. The announcement was greeted with euphoria by the thousands amassed that day on the Old Town Square. Memories of the horrors of World War II were still fresh, and many hoped (naively, in retrospect) that Communism would bring long-desired peace and prosperity. For fans of Czech-born author Milan Kundera, Gottwald's address from this balcony is humorously and ironically recounted in the first chapter of the novel *The Book of Laughter*

Kinský Palace balcony.

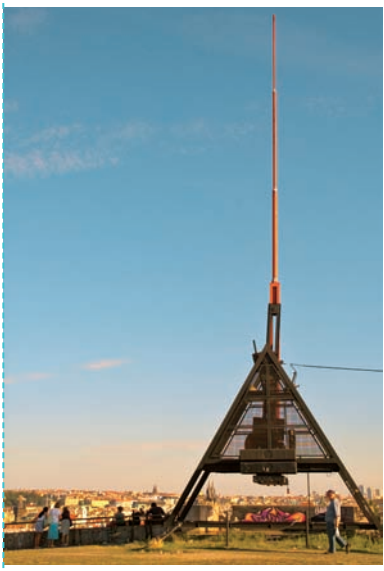
and Forgetting. 🕘 ***15 min. Staroměstské nám. 12, Prague 1. Metro: Staroměstská.***

7 **U Rozvařilů.** It's getting harder and harder to find communist-era eateries around town. These are usually simple stand-ups, serving classical dishes out of steam tables at prices workers can afford. This is one of the last authentic ones in the center. To find it, walk out toward Náměstí Republiky and continue walking down Na poříčí. ***Na poříčí 26. No phone. $.***

8 ★★ **Letná (Former Stalin Statue).** From the Old Town Square, follow the fashionable street Pařížská to the Vltava river, then cross the bridge and ascend one of the walkways leading up to Letná park. It was here, at the top of the stairs, where a metronome now sways, that the world's largest Stalin statue—a full 50m (164 ft.) tall—once stood. The statue was commissioned in the early '50s at the height of the former Soviet dictator's cult of personality and was finished in 1955. Unfortunately for Czechoslovakia's Communist leaders, by the time the statue was done, Stalin was falling out of favor in the Soviet Union. The statue hovered uneasily over the city for several years, but by the 1960s it was clear it had to go. In 1962, the city dynamited it out of existence with nearly 2,000 pounds of explosives that knocked out windows all around the city. The statue's creator, Otakar Švec, didn't live to see his work demolished—he had committed suicide several years earlier. The Museum of Communism (see above) has several good photographs of the statue and even one of its demolition. The statue's design, depicting Stalin standing at the head of a line of workers, soldiers, and citizens, was dubbed by local wags at the time as "the world's largest bread line"—a reference to the notorious shortages of food staples. City officials are not quite sure what to do with this area, and for now most of it stands empty, with only the metronome forlornly marking time. 🕘 ***15 min. Letná, Prague 1. Metro: Staroměstská.***

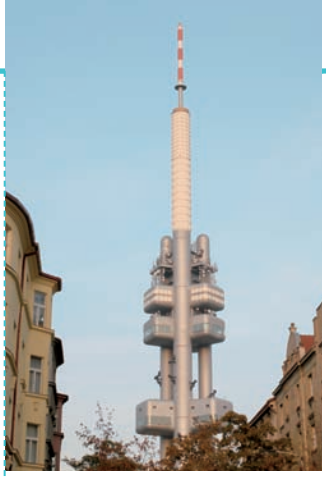
9 ★ **Hotel International (Crowne Plaza Hotel).** This hotel, about 3km (2 miles) northwest of Letná, in the suburb of Dejvice, is the city's best example of 1950s Socialist-Realist architecture. If you've been to Moscow or seen Warsaw's Palace of Science and Culture, you'll recognize this Stalinist skyscraper's signature wedding-cake style. In the years following World War II, Stalin marked his turf in the newly acquired Eastern bloc by offering these skyscrapers as

The world's largest statue of Stalin once stood where this metronome now sways.



"gifts" (that could not be refused). For years, the building operated as a mid-range hotel for party functionaries until it was taken over by the Holiday Inn group in the 1990s and retrofitted into a modern luxury hotel. Today, the building is noteworthy for its overall design and exterior mosaics. Take a look, too, at the lobby, which retains much of its overall 1950s appearance. 🕘 ***20 min. Koulová 15, Prague 6.*** ☎ ***296-537-111. Metro: Hradčanská (plus tram 8).***

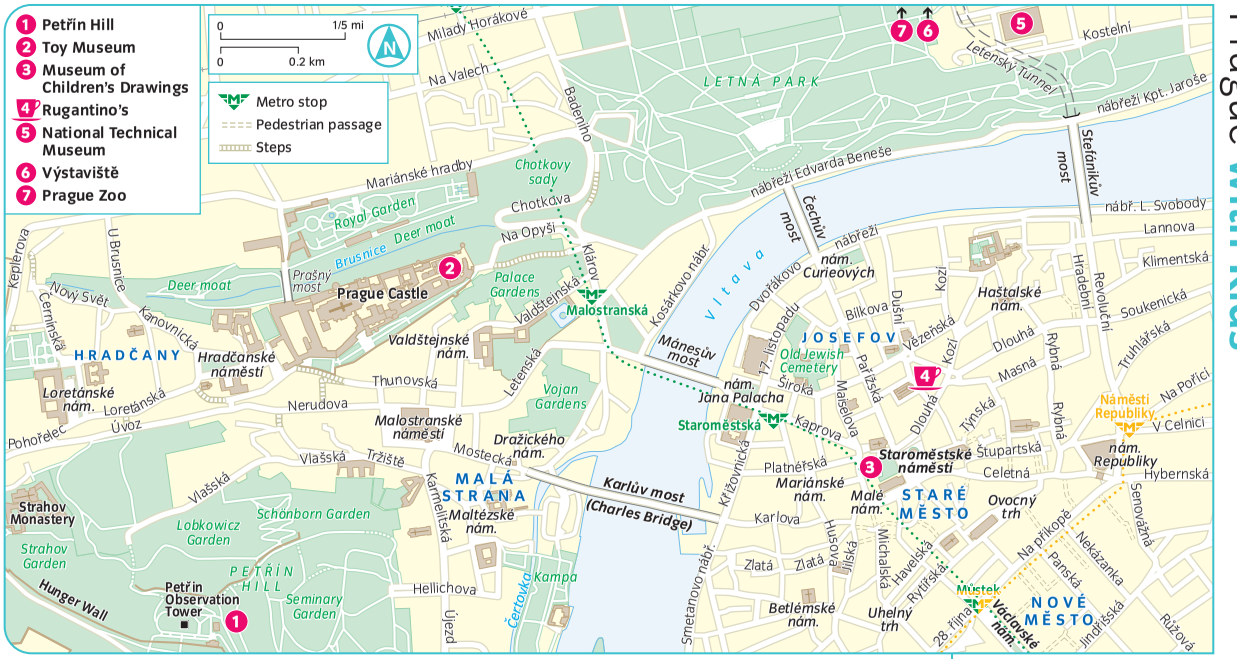
10 ★ Former Gottwald Mausoleum on Vítkov Hill. For more Socialist Realist style and out-and-out Communist kitsch, make a special trip across town to the suburb of Žižkov to a monument that once held the mummified remains of Czechoslovakia's first Communist leader, Klement Gottwald (in much the same way Lenin's remains were preserved at Moscow's Red Square). The complex, which includes the world's largest statue of a horse, was originally designed in the 1920s to honor the legendary 15th-century Hussite general Jan Žižka, but Gottwald co-opted the site in the '50s to function as a kind of Socialist sanctuary for Communist anniversaries and Labor Day celebrations. When Gottwald died in 1953—in keeping with the Communist fashion of the day—his remains were preserved here and put on public display. Unfortunately, the Czech embalmers were not as skilled as their Soviet comrades and it wasn't long before Gottwald's body began to deteriorate. The body had to be re-embalmed every 18 months and was permanently withdrawn from public view in 1961. After 1989, this monument was practically forgotten and only maintains irregulars hours now. If you'd like to see inside, try phoning ahead to arrange a special tour. The monument is now under control of the Czech National Museum, which recently announced plans to develop the site as a museum of modern history. 🕘 ***20 min. U památníku, Prague 3.*** ☎ ***222-781-676. www.nm.cz. Tours by appointment only. Metro: Florenc.***



Žižkov TV tower.

11 ★★ Žižkov TV Tower. Prague's multistory TV tower is arguably the ugliest building ever built in the Golden City. At the same time there's something undeniably alluring about its ultrasmooth shape and sheer scale—it dwarfs everything around it. The tower dates from the late 1980s and was built to broadcast TV and radio signals, but there's always been an undercurrent of suspicion that the real purpose was to jam signals coming in from the BBC and Radio Free Europe. The sculptures of babies crawling up and down—by local jokester-artist David Černý—lend a surreal effect. Take the high-speed elevators up to the observation deck for impressive views in the city. 🕘 ***30 min. Mahlerovy Sady 1, Vinohrady.*** ☎ ***242-418-778. 150 Kč (adults), 60 Kč (children). Daily 10am–11:30pm. Metro: Jiřího z Poděbrad.***

Prague with Kids

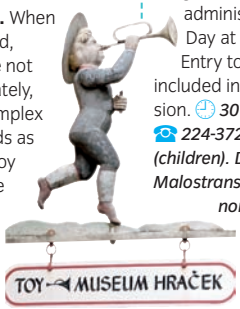


Prague is not an easy city for kids. Younger children will like the castles, bridges, puppets, and trams, but shuffling the kids around from place to place (over lots of cobblestones) will be a constant challenge. Older kids will probably show only a passing interest in the city's history and architecture and could very well buckle (as anyone would) after an overly long day at Prague Castle. The tourist authorities have been slow to add attractions aimed at younger visitors but fortunately there are a few standbys that have nothing to do with Gothic or Baroque architecture. This is a lot to pack into one day; you may have to choose just one of the last two stops depending on your interest. **START: Žluté lázně (Yellow Beach) or Podolí.**

1 ★★ Petřín. The Petřín Hill that rises above Malá Strana is filled with great things for kids. You can follow the Petřín tour on p 84, or take the funicular train (lanová dráha) to the top and just wander around from there. In addition to a mock Eiffel Tower (built to a quarter the size of the original) that you can climb to the top, you'll find an old-fashioned mirror maze ("Bludiště") as well as the Štefánik Observatory, open for stargazing on clear nights. *60 min. Petřín. Petřín Tower (Petřínská rozhledna). 257-320-112. 60 Kč (20 Kč for children). May–Sept 10am–10pm; Oct–Apr 10am–6pm. Bludiště: 50 Kč (20 Kč for children). May–Aug 10am–10pm; Sept–Apr 10am–6pm. Štefánik Observatory: 50 Kč. Mon–Fri 2–7pm, 9–11pm; Sat–Sun 10am–noon, 2–7pm, 9–11pm. Metro: Malostranská (plus tram 12, 22, or 23 south three stops to Újezd).*

Inside the maze of mirrors on Petřín Hill.

2 ★ Toy Museum (Muzeum hraček). When you're 6 or 7 years old, Gothic cathedrals are not very riveting. Fortunately, the Prague castle complex has something for kids as well. This multilevel toy museum is one of the best of its kind in Europe, featuring loads of traditional wooden toys, dolls, construction sets, train sets, and lots of other amusements. It's housed in the offices of the former Supreme Burgrave, the seat of the castle administration (see the tour "A Day at Prague Castle," above). Entry to the museum is not included in the general castle admission. *30 min. Jiřská 6, Hradčany. 224-372-294. 60 Kč (adults), 30 Kč (children). Daily 9:30am–5pm. Metro: Malostranská (plus tram 22 or 23 north to Pražský hrad).*



This sign marks the entrance to the Toy Museum at Prague Castle.

Splish, Splash

As any seasoned parent knows, one of the best way to keep kids occupied and happy is to let them splash around in some water. Fortunately, Prague has a couple of good options.

In good weather, head to **Yellow Beach** (Žluté lázně) for some outdoor fun (Podolské nábřeží, Podolí; ☎ **244-463-777**). This popular grassy riverside beach is located south of town on the Old Town side of the Vltava. It has a nice outdoor pool and lots of activities for both big and little kids. A decent on-site restaurant means you can make a day of it. Admission is 80 Kč adults, 30 Kč children. It's open June to September from 8am to 2am.

If it's too cold for Žluté lázně, come to the **Podolí indoor pool** and recreation center situated just across the street (Podolská 74. Podolí; ☎ **241-433-952**). There are actually two big outdoor pools here too, making it a good choice in winter or summer. There are a mock beach, solarium, and sauna on the premises. It's open daily from 6am to 9:30pm; admission is 80 Kč Monday to Friday, 110 Kč weekends. To get to either spot, take the Metro to Karlovo náměstí, then tram 3, 16, 17, or 21 to the Dvorce stop.

The whole family can blow off some steam at the Podolí pools.

3 Museum of Children's Drawings (Dům U Zelené žáby). Back in Old Town is a unique family-friendly museum that displays artwork done by children. On weekends, it's a veritable artistic workshop as the kids are invited to come up with their own creations. 🕘 ***45 min. U Radnice 13/8. ☎ 224-234-482. 40 Kč (adults), 20 Kč (children). Tues–Sun 1–6pm. Metro: Staroměstská.***

4 ★★ Rugantino's. Just across Old Town Square from the Museum of Children's Drawings and down a small side street, you'll find the most family-friendly restaurant in the city. Czechs don't often take their children out to restaurants, but here the owners and wait staff welcome kids with open arms. While you're wading through a menu of some of the best pizzas in the city, the staff will be handing out colored pencils and doodling

The fountains at Výstaviště.

paper. Popular venue for children's parties. ***Dušní 4. ☎ 222-318-172. Metro: Staroměstská. $.***

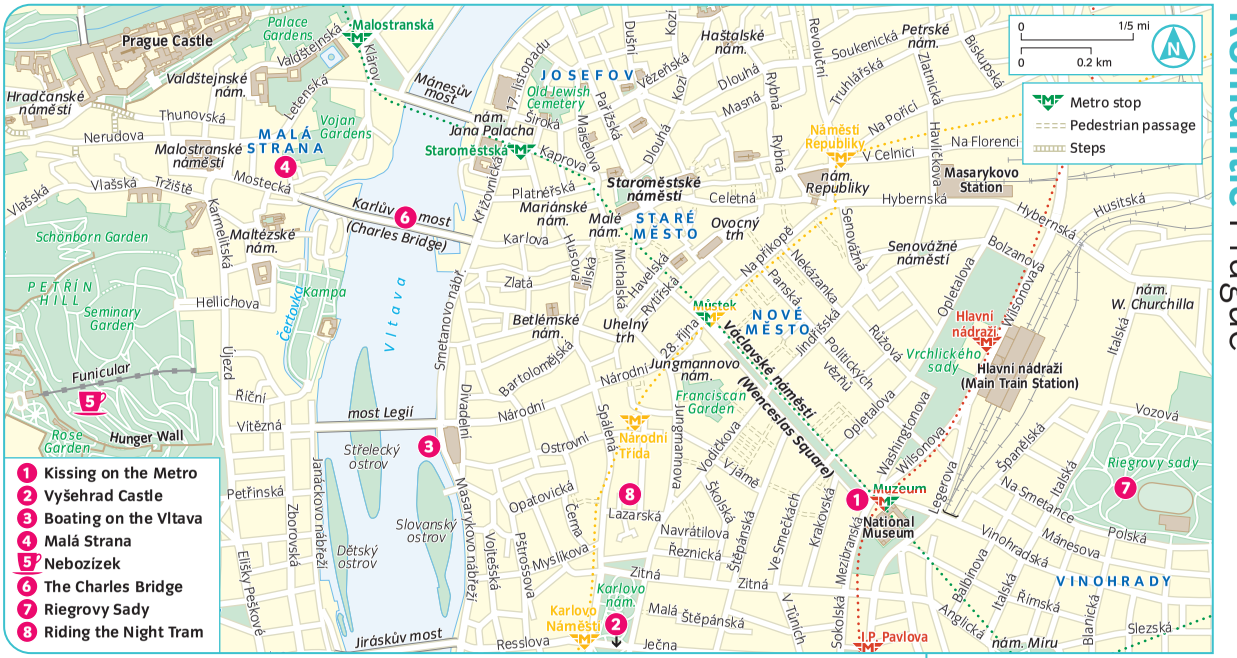
5 ★★ National Technical Museum (Národní technické museum). Head north from the city square, across the river, to this fascinating museum stuffed with classic automobiles, historic airplanes, full-sized trains, old bikes, and just about every other mode of transport ever invented. It occasionally hosts special exhibitions for kids, like a highly popular dinosaur show a couple of years back. The museum was closed in 2007 for reconstruction but was scheduled to reopen by 2008. Call for hours and admission prices. ***1 hr. Kostelní 42, Letná. ☎ 220-399-111. Metro: Vltavská (plus trams 1, 25, 26 to Kamenická).***

6 ★★ Výstaviště. Beyond the technical museum in the outlying district of Holešovice is another kids' mecca: the Výstaviště fairgrounds complex. Built around the turn of the 20th century in beautiful Art Nouveau architecture, it's got a small amusement park (with a merry-go-round and a few "Tilt-O-Whirl" type rides), a massive singing fountain (with water and lighting timed to classical and popular music), and a small Sea World–style aquarium called "Mořský svět." Entry to the amusement park is free, but separate admissions are charged for the fountain and Mořský svět. ***2 hr. Křižík's Fountain (Křižíkova fontána): ☎ 220-103-224. 180 Kč. Apr–Oct 7–11pm. Seaworld (Mořský svět): ☎ 220-103-275. 240 Kč (adults), 145 Kč (children 4–15). Daily 10am–7pm. Metro: Nádraží Holešovice (then tram 15 to Výstaviště).***

7 ★★ Prague Zoo. Moving farther north from Výstaviště, Prague's zoo has improved dramatically in recent years. It was nearly totally inundated in the 2002 flood that struck the city, and the authorities have had to invest heavily in new facilities. The collection of giraffes is one of the finest in Central Europe. ***2 hr. Best on weekdays, when it's less crowded. U Trojského zámku 120. ☎ 296-112-111. 100 Kč (adults), 70 Kč (children), 300 Kč (families). Apr–Oct 9am–6pm; Nov–Mar 9am–4pm. Metro: Nádraží Holešovice (then bus no. 112).***

Tiger at the Prague Zoo.

Romantic Prague



1. Kissing on the Metro
2. Vyšehrad Castle
3. Boating on the Vltava
4. Malá Strana
5. Nebozízek
6. The Charles Bridge
7. Riegrovy Sady
8. Riding the Night Tram

If you've ever read any books by Czech authors Milan Kundera or Ivan Klima, you know that a deep, abiding affection—bordering on obsession—for the opposite sex lies just below the surface here. Prague romance is not the "candlelight and flowers" variety. Czechs, in general, are far too pragmatic. There's no need to waste time on a box of chocolates. Under communism, flirting and drinking beer were practically the only two pleasures left in life, and Czechs made good use of both. Attitudes remain refreshingly relaxed, and you'll see couples holding hands and kissing on park benches, on trams, and in the pubs. It's infectious and there's no point in resisting. So take a walk, hold hands, and do what comes naturally. No one's paying any attention. **START: Metro to Muzeum.**

1 Kissing on the Metro. Kissing on the metro has a long and honored history in Prague, going back to the days under communism when whole families would live in tiny two- or three-room apartments. Young couples were often at a loss for privacy and had to make do with any space available. Any metro line works, but the C line (Red) between Muzeum and Háje might be the best for this purpose. The gaps between stations seem to stretch on for miles.

2 ★★ Vyšehrad Castle. Prague's "other" castle here at Vyšehrad is far more dignified and in its own way more moving than the admittedly more Disneyesque-style Prague Castle downriver. It's less commercial and there's a feeling of timelessness and place that's increasingly rare in modern-day Prague. Bring a blanket and a bottle of wine and hike up to the castle grounds. If you're lucky you'll have the place to yourself. *Soběslavová 1. ☎ 241-410-348. www.praha-vysehrad.cz. Free admission. Metro: Vyšehrad (plus a considerable walk).*

3 ★★ kids Boating on the Vltava. This is great for kids, but it's not bad for grown-ups either. You can rent little pedal- or row-boats from vendors along the embankment just near the National Theater (Národní divadlo). You can't pedal far, but far enough that no one can see what you're doing in there. *70 Kč an hour. Metro: Národní třída (plus tram 9 or 22).*

4 ★★★ Malá Strana. It's no accident that all those expensive boutique hotels are situated in the Lesser Quarter (Malá Strana). It's the one neighborhood in Prague that truly gives Paris a run for its money. Just about any walk will do, but try

View from Vyšehrad Castle.

Get cozy in a boat as you drift along the Vltava.

in and around the little streets near Kampa Park. ***Metro: Malostranská.***

5 ★ **Nebozízek.** Prague is a city of great views, but there are only a handful of elegant restaurants that can really deliver on this score. Nebozízek stands halfway up Petřín Hill and commands a table view over the sparkling city below. To find it, take the funicular train one stop to Nebozízek station. ***Nebozízek.*** ☎ ***222-318-172. Metro: Malostranská (plus tram 12, 22, or 23 to Újezd & then the funicular). $.***

6 ★★★ **The Charles Bridge at Night.** By day, Prague's signature bridge is thronged with tourists, buskers, sketch artists, touts, and hawkers. The spirit of the place can be totally drowned out. By night, it's a different story. The crowds thin out and the guys selling the cheap jewelry and the old-time photos go home. At the same time, the castle floodlights come on and both the Old Town and Malá Strana sides of the river are caught in the play of light and shadow. Find a spot along the wall of bridge, uncork a bottle of Czech sparking wine, "Bohemia Sekt," and feel the invigorating breeze over the river.

7 ★ **Riegrovy Sady.** Prague has plenty of green spaces to stretch out on a bench or blanket, but Vinohrady's beautiful hillside park combines the best attributes of Lovers' Lanes everywhere: a dreamy castle view in the distance and a row of safe and quiet benches perched along a ridge to give you an excuse to linger. Hike up into the park from Vinohradská třída and follow the path to the edge overlooking the train station below and castle beyond. ***Best, of course, after dark. Metro: Muzeum (tram 11 to Vinohradský Pavilon).***

8 **Riding the Night Tram.** Prague's tram system is like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. By day, the trams are a paragon of transportation virtue, ferrying carloads of accountants, shop clerks, dentists, workers, and students to their usual destinations. After midnight, the system lets its hair down. Prague's special night trams take over and the trams become veritable parties on wheels. The central night tram junction is at Lazarská ul. in Nové Město. From here cars fan out in all directions until 5am. Do as the locals do and share a seat—guy on the bottom and girl in his lap. ***Metro: Národní třída.***

Nebozizek is a great place for a romantic dinner.

3 The Best Neighborhood Walks

The Jewish Quarter (Josefov)

1. Maiselova Street
2. Pinkas Synagogue
3. Old Jewish Cemetery
4. Klausen Synagogue
5. Ceremonial Hall
6. Shelanu Café & Deli
7. Old New Synagogue
8. Jewish Community Center
9. Maisel Synagogue
10. Spanish Synagogue
11. St. Agnes Convent
12. Chez Marcel

Metro stop
Pedestrian passage

0 100 yds
0 100 m

Previous page: A quiet street in Malá Strana.

This tour focuses on the remains of the former Jewish ghetto. The Prague Jewish Museum (Židovské muzeum v Praze) maintains four synagogues as well as the most moving remnant, the Old Jewish Cemetery (Starý židovský hřbitov). Another surviving synagogue, the Old New synagogue (Staronová synagoga), is maintained by the Jewish community of Prague. You can walk the ghetto for free, but to tour the exhibits you need an entry ticket (see the box "The Jewish Quarter: Practical Matters," p 57, for details on admissions charges and hours for Jewish Quarter attractions). The Old New synagogue requires a separate ticket. A combined entry for all of the sights is also available. Note that many of the sights on this tour are closed Saturdays, the Jewish Sabbath, and on Jewish holidays. Try to get an early start; the area gets very crowded in season. **START: Old Town Square.**

1 Maiselová Street. From Old Town Square, walk past St. Nicholas Church (Chrám sv. Mikuláše) and then past the birth house of Franz Kafka (p 27, bullet 1). Maiselová begins here and threads its way through the center of the former ghetto. This was "Main Street" when the ghetto was a walled-in community, and here you'll find some of the most important surviving buildings and the former Jewish Town Hall. *10 min.*

2 ★★ Pinkas Synagogue (Pinkasová synagoga). Continue walking down Maiselová past the Maisel synagogue (we'll return to it later), turning left on Široká. Opposite Široká 4 is the main entrance to the Pinkas synagogue and the Old Jewish Cemetery. There's a cash desk where you can buy your combined ticket for the Jewish Museum. The Pinkas synagogue is Prague's second-oldest Jewish house of worship, dating from the 1500s. Following World War II, the names of 77,297 Czech Jews who perished in the Nazi concentration camps were painted on the walls. The names include former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's paternal grandparents: Arnošt and Olga Koerbel. The synagogue also holds a deeply moving display of pictures drawn by children held at the Terezín concentration camp during World War II. *30 min. Entrance opposite Široká 4.*

You'll find this market near Klausen Synagogue and the Ceremonial Hall.

Detail of a tombstone in the Old Jewish Cemetery.

3 ★★★ Old Jewish Cemetery (Starý židovský hřbitov). An absolute must-see on par with Prague Castle. The Old Jewish Cemetery is Prague's oldest surviving Jewish burial ground, dating to the middle of the 15th century. Because local laws at the time prohibited Jews from burying their dead outside the ghetto, this tiny graveyard is crammed with some 12,000 visible tombstones and thousands of more bodies stacked up in 12 to 15 layers below ground. The last grave dates from 1787. The most prominent grave, in the far corner near the Ceremonial Hall, is that of former Jewish scholar Rabbi Loew, the creator of the legendary Golem (he died in 1609). Across from Rabbi Loew's grave is that of Mordechai Maisel, a former leader of the ghetto for whom the Maisel synagogue and Maiselová street are named. Many visitors continue the ancient tradition of placing small pebbles on grave markers or stuffing the graves with small scraps of paper bearing wishes. ◴ ***30 min. Široká 3 (enter through the Pinkas synagogue).***

History 101: The Jewish Quarter

For centuries, Prague harbored one of Central Europe's largest and best-educated Jewish communities. This small area just north of the Old Town Square was the center of Jewish life from the 13th to the late 19th century. Though Jews were restricted from living outside the ghetto for much of that time, the Jewish community enjoyed relative peace and tolerance. The high point came in the late 16th and early 17th centuries during the reign of Emperor Rudolf II. The ghetto began to decline in the 19th century after Jews won the right of abode and could live wherever they wanted. Many chose to leave, and by the end of the 19th century the ghetto had become a slum. In an early version of gentrification, the city knocked down many of the buildings, including several synagogues, and built the luxury turn-of-the-century apartment houses you see today.

The Jewish Quarter is not a Holocaust site per se, but World War II did have a devastating effect on the city's Jews. Tens of thousands were deported and murdered in the concentration camps, leaving behind a small community of just a few thousand. The Nazis originally planned to build a museum here of Europe's extinct race of Jews. Ironically, many of the treasures on display are from Jewish towns and villages that were pillaged by the Germans.

Klausen Synagogue.

4 ★ Klausen Synagogue (Klausová synagoga). The Klausen synagogue is situated behind the Old Jewish Cemetery on U Starého hřbitova. It was the biggest synagogue during the ghetto's heyday and today holds a permanent exhibition of everyday Jewish customs and traditions. *20 min. U Starého hřbitova 3a.*

5 ★ Ceremonial Hall (Obřadní síň). Just down from the Klausen synagogue is the former Ceremonial Hall and mortuary of the Old Jewish Cemetery. Appearances can be deceiving: The Ceremonial Hall looks like the oldest building on the street, but in fact it's one of the youngest, dating to just 1912. The exhibition here describes Jewish customs and traditions relating to illness and death. *20 min.*

6 Shelanu Café & Deli. Follow U starého hřbitova around until it meets Břehová to find this New York–style kosher deli. They offer a range of classic sandwiches, such as pastrami, egg salad, and smoked salmon. Opens early for breakfast. Closed Saturdays. *Břehová 8. 221-665-141. $.*

7 ★★ Old New Synagogue (Staronová synagoga). From Břehová, find Maiselová again. You can't miss the Old New synagogue, still standing and functioning much as it has for some 800 years. The architectural style is early Gothic and the vaulted interior hall is modeled after a 12th-century synagogue that once stood in the German city of Worms. The synagogue was originally called "New" but took on the name "Old New" in the 16th century when other, newer synagogues were built. The Old New synagogue is not formally part of the Prague Jewish Museum and requires a separate ticket to enter. *30 min.*

8 Jewish Community Center (Židovská radnice). Next to the Old New synagogue, this was once the Jewish town hall. It now houses an information and cultural center

Old New Synagogue and the Jewish Community Center.

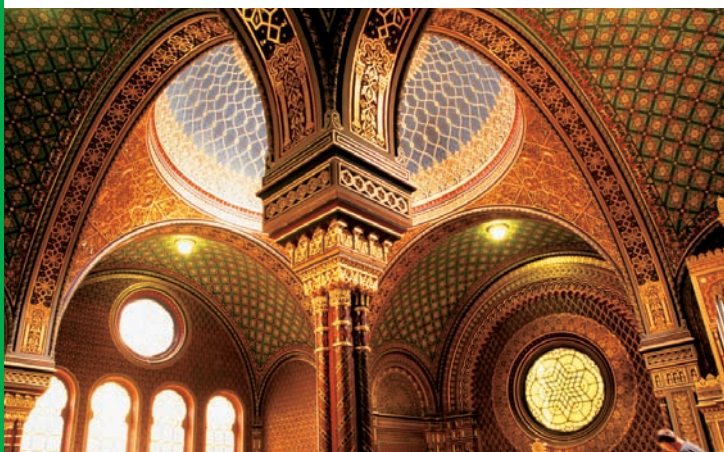
Detail of a house in the Jewish Quarter.

for locals and visitors. On the tower facing the Old New synagogue is an old Hebrew clock that keeps time running counterclockwise. *Maiselová 18.*

9 ★ Maisel Synagogue. Retrace your steps back up Maiselová, crossing Široká. This is an original Renaissance synagogue dating from the 16th century that underwent extensive renovation and is now in the neo-Gothic style. It's no longer a functioning synagogue, but it houses the first part of an exhibition on the history of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia. (The exhibition continues in the Spanish synagogue.) *20 min. Maiselová 10.*

10 ★★ Spanish Synagogue (Španělská synagoga). The Spanish synagogue is the last stop on a tour of the Jewish museum. It lies just outside the immediate ghetto area, along Široká. The design is Moorish, a popular style for 19th-century synagogues. Arabesque designs fill the stunning interior. The permanent exhibition

Inside the Spanish Synagogue.



continues the history of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia. If you need a quick coffee, there's a small cafe attached to the right of the synagogue. Just outside is a comical statue of the writer Franz Kafka. *20 min. Dušní 12.*

11 ★★ St. Agnes Convent (Klášter sv. Anežky České). After all that history, decompress with a short stroll through one of the quietest and loveliest corners of the Old Town. Walk first along Vězeňská, then bear to the left on the small street U obecního dvora until you reach Anežská. You can walk the grounds of this former convent, which is made up of early Gothic buildings dating from the 13th century. The National Museum also maintains a gallery here of Medieval and Gothic art. *45 min. U Milosrdných 17. 224-810-628. 100 Kč. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm.*

St. Agnes Convent's art gallery.

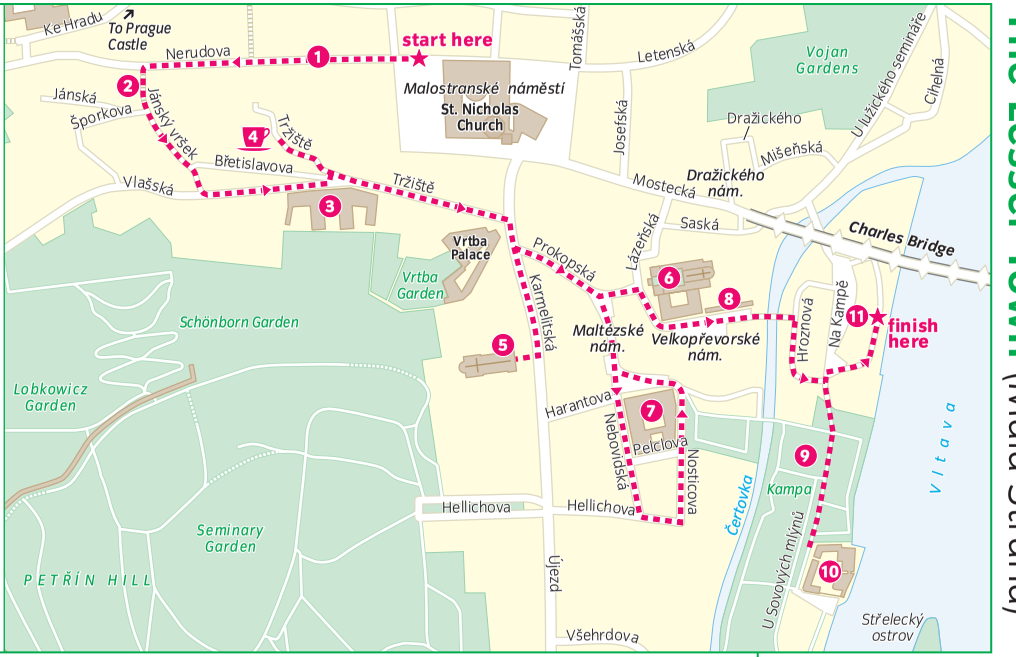
12 Chez Marcel. There are plenty of very good restaurants around here (see chapter 6), but this hidden French bistro is handy for something quick and light like a salad or just a glass of good French wine. *Haštalská 12. 222-315-676. $$.*

The Jewish Quarter: Practical Matters

A ticket to visit the six Prague Jewish Museum sights (the Pinkas, Klaus, Maisel, and Spanish synagogues; the Old Jewish Cemetery; and the Ceremonial Hall) costs 300 Kč per person (200 Kč children). A separate ticket for entering the Old New synagogue costs another 200 Kč (140 Kč children). A combined admission for all of the sights is available for 480 Kč (320 Kč for children). Tickets are available at cash desks located throughout the former ghetto. All of the major attractions are closed on Saturdays and Jewish holidays, so plan your visit accordingly. For more information, call **222-317-191** or visit www.jewishmuseum.cz. The museum sights are open Sunday to Friday from 9am to 6pm April through October; from 9am to 4:30pm November through March.

The Lesser Town (Malá Strana)

1. Nerudova
2. Janský Vršek
3. Schoenborn Palace
4. Všebarácnická Rychta
5. Church of Our Lady Victorious—Infant Jesus of Prague
6. The Maltese Order's Church of Our Lady Below the Chain
7. Nostitz Palace
8. John Lennon Peace Wall
9. Kampa Park
10. Museum Kampa
11. Na Kampě



Steps

0 100 yds
0 100 m

In contrast to the Old Town, the Lesser Town feels quieter and more refined. It gives Paris a run for its money in terms of romance. Many of the most important sights in the Lesser Town are covered in the "Best in One Day" tour (p 8), and its gardens and parks are covered in the "Gardens of Malá Strana" tour (p 90). This tour covers a little bit of familiar territory but is intended to get you off the main drag and onto the quieter cobblestone streets that define the prettiest part of Prague. Feel free to wander off the recommended course if you see a quiet alley, courtyard, or garden that merits exploring.

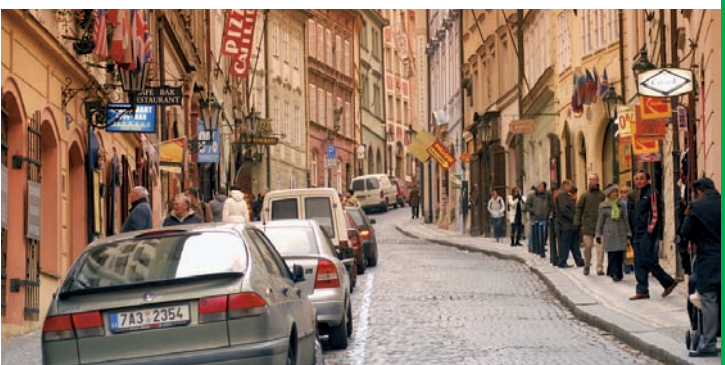
START: **Malostranské nám.**

1 Nerudová. From Malostranské náměstí follow Nerudová up toward the castle. St. Nicholas Church (Kostel sv. Mikuláše, p 15, bullet 14) is on your left as you walk uphill. This street takes its name from Czech author Jan Neruda, who was born here in the 19th century. The Nobel prize–winning Chilean poet Pablo Neruda admired Jan Neruda's writings so much that he adopted "Neruda" as a pen name. The street is lined with stunning Baroque palaces, many of which have been given cute descriptive names. Look especially at houses at no. 11 (U červeného beránka/House of the Red Lamb), no. 12 (U tří housliček/House of the Three Violins), and no. 16 (U zlaté číše/House of the Golden Cup). 🕘 ***15 min.***

2 Janský Vršek. Instead of going all the way to the castle, turn left down these inviting stairs. This takes you into the quiet heart of upper Malá Strana. Many of the streets here still bear traces of the days when Prague was bilingual German-speaking. On the corner with Šporková, the street sign reads JOHANNESBERG GASSE, the German name for Janský Vršek. 🕘 ***10 min.***

3 Schoenborn Palace (Schoenbornský palác). Continue walking along Janský Vršek, making a left at the intersection with Vlašská. The American flag fluttering in the breeze marks the front of the U.S. embassy, quartered in a 17th-century Baroque palace, the former home of Austro-Hungarian general Count Colloredo-Mansfeld. The U.S. government bought the house in 1925 for the princely sum of $117,000. It has more than 100 rooms and 7 acres of gardens stretching up Petřín Hill. Franz Kafka rented a room here in 1917. The

Nerudová Street.



The "Infant Jesus of Prague."

building is not open to the public. 🕘 *10 min. Tržiště 15.*

4 **Všebaráčnická Rychta.** If you're ready for a cold one or quick bite, this rambling Czech pub has great beer and a wonderful atmosphere. To find it, look for the little part of Tržiště that runs up from the Alchymist Grand Hotel. *Tržiště 23.* ☎ *257-532-461. $.*

5 ★ **Church of Our Lady Victorious—Infant Jesus of Prague.** From the U.S. embassy, walk down Tržiště to the bottom of the street, turning right on Karmelitská. This early-Baroque church of the Carmelite order is famous for the wax statue of baby Jesus displayed on an altar on the right wing of the church. The "Infant Jesus of Prague" was presented to the Carmelites in 1628 and commands an almost cult-like status in some countries. Copies of the "bambino" are sold in the church's small museum and at souvenir shops in the area. 🕘 *15 min. Karmelitská 9.* ☎ *257-533-646. Free admission. Mon–Sat 10am–5:30pm, Sun 1–5pm.*

6 ★★ **The Maltese Order's Church of Our Lady Below the Chain (Kostel Panny Marie pod řetězem).** Cross Karmelitská and walk to the left until you come to Prokopská. Turn down this street and walk into the large Maltézské náměstí, named for this large church off the square belonging to the Knights of Malta. One of the best Romanesque designs in Prague, this church replaced an even older church after it burned in 1420. You can see remnants of the original along the portal and inside the church courtyard. 🕘 *15 min. Lázenská ul. Open during masses.*

7 **Nostitz Palace (Nostický palác).** This palace, now home to the Czech Culture Ministry, is a grand, 17th-century Baroque design attributed to Francesco Caratti. A Prague noble family who strongly supported the arts used to own it, and its ornate halls once housed a famed private art collection. You can sometimes hear chamber concerts through its windows. 🕘 *10 min. Maltézské nám. 1.* ☎ *257-085-111. www.mkcr.cz. Occasionally open to the public; call or visit website (Czech only) for details.*

The Maltese Church.

The graffiti-covered John Lennon peace wall.

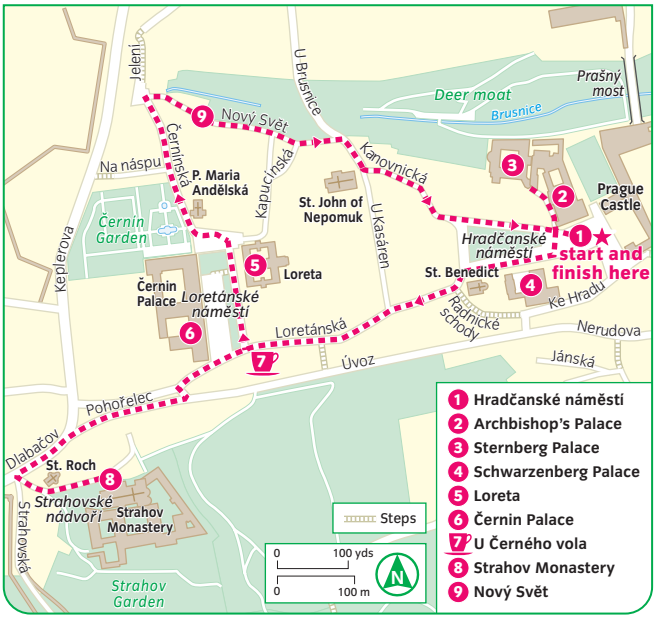
8 ★ John Lennon Peace Wall. Before seeing the John Lennon Peace Wall, make a small detour down Nebovidská (to the right of the Nostitz Palace), past the luxurious quarters of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Walk to the end of the street and turn left on Hellichová. Make another left onto Nosticová. This is one of the quietest and nicest parts of Malá Strana, fully removed from the city. In a couple of years, this street will be cleaned up like all the rest, but for the moment enjoy the elegant, faded feeling. To find the Lennon Wall, walk down Nosticová, returning to Maltézské náměstí and the Knights of Malta Church. Follow Lázenská to the right onto another large square: Velkopřevorské náměstí. The French embassy will be to your right and this half-hidden graffiti wall, a Prague original, to your left. The Lennon Peace Wall came into existence shortly after Beatles musician John Lennon was killed in 1980. Under communism it morphed into an impromptu protest space. The secret police tried to stop the graffiti writers, but every day the wall seemed to be covered with new messages extolling the virtues of John Lennon instead of that other "Lenin." Interest in the wall has dropped off in recent years, but in late 2007 the wall was still sporting a large peace sign painted beneath the word IMAGINE. 🕘 ***15 min. (20 min. if you plan on writing your own message). Velkopřevorské nám.***

9 ★★ Kampa Park. Continue walking, crossing a small bridge over the Čertovká stream to reach Kampa Island and this park, Malá Strana's biggest stretch of green. There are gorgeous views over the Vltava on one side and the charming footbridges and mills over the Čertovká on the other. The big lawn in the middle is the perfect spot to throw down a blanket and open a book. 🕘 ***20 min.***

10 ★ Museum Kampa. Near the Vltava at about the midpoint of the park, you'll find this very good, relatively new museum dedicated to contemporary Central European art. The permanent collection has works by noted Czech sculptor Otto Gutfreund and Czech painter František Kupka. 🕘 ***1 hr. U sovových mlýnů 2.*** ☎ ***257-286-147. 120 Kč. Daily 10am–6pm.***

11 ★ Na Kampě. Return to the center of the city via this small square, lined with hotels and restaurants on both sides. Take the little street that leads off the square to the right of Na Kampě 15 to walk along the edge of the river and get some great photos of the Charles Bridge. 🕘 ***15 min.***

The Castle District (Hradčany)



The Castle District is quiet and exclusive, populated by embassies, institutes, and ministries. The area was leveled by fire in 1541, and was rebuilt in Renaissance and Baroque styles. It's easy to combine this tour with the longer tour of Prague Castle on p 30.

START: Hradčanské nám.

1 Hradčanské náměstí One of the most beautiful and tranquil squares in the city, and a nice place to relax on a bench with a book. The plague column in the center was built in 1726 by the Baroque master Ferdinand Brokoff, creator of several statues on Charles Bridge. 🕘 *15 min.*

2 Archbishop's Palace (Arcibiskupský palác). The seat of the Prague Archbishop is unfortunately not open to the public, though you can enter the interior chapel once a year, the day before Good Friday. The staid Renaissance exterior was later remodeled into exuberant late-Baroque Rococo. 🕘 *10 min. Hradčanské nám. 16. No phone. Open 1 day a year.*

3 ★★ Sternberg Palace (Šternberský palác). The real treasure here lies just behind the Archbishop's palace. This is home to the National Gallery's excellent collection of European art from the 14th to the 18th century and includes works by Rembrandt, El Greco, Goya, and Van Dyck. 🕘 *2 hr. Hradčanské nám. 15.* ☎ *233-350-068. 100 Kč. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm.*

4 Schwarzenberg Palace. Across the square, the Renaissance sgraffito on the exterior makes this imposing palace easy to recognize. The Schwarzenberg family acquired the property by marriage in the early 18th century. For years it housed the Military History Museum but in 2008 it was expected to reopen as the National Gallery's Museum of Baroque Art. ***Hradčanské nám. 15.***

5 ★★ Loreta. Follow Loretánská, which leads off the square to the left. This remarkable cloister, church, and Baroque pilgrimage was built in the 17th century. It was modeled on the original Santa Casa (Sacred House) in the Italian town of Loreta. A duplicate Santa Casa stands in the courtyard. Lovers of Baroque will enjoy the ornate interiors and the statuary that lines the outside. The Treasury on the first floor holds a diamond monstrance from 1699 made from some 6,222 diamonds. The carillon of 27 bells is unique in Prague and chimes on the hour. ***1 hr. Loretánské nám. 7. 220-516-740. 110 Kč. Tues–Sun 9am–12:15pm, 1–4:30pm.***

6 Černin Palace (Černinský palác). Across the street from the Loreta, this forbidding-looking palace is home to the Czech Republic's Foreign Ministry. It was here, in 1948, that Jan Masaryk, the son of the first Czechoslovak president Tomáš G. Masaryk, fell to his death from a high window. He opposed the Communist coup, and it's never been resolved whether he jumped from the window or was pushed. ***10 min. Loretánské nám. No phone. Closed to the public.***

7 U Černého vola. This is one of the best traditional Czech pubs still standing. Big wooden tables, decent pub grub, and excellent Kozel beer on tap. ***Loretánské nám. 1. 220-513-481. $.***

8 ★★ Strahov Monastery (Strahovský Klášter). From Loretánské náměstí, follow Pohořá elec. This medieval monastery of the Premonstratensian order goes back all the way to the 12th century. It was shut down by the communists but has since reopened. The monks' chambers are off-limits, but visitors can still visit the amazing Strahov Library (Strahovská knihovna), laid out in two immense Baroque halls: the Philosophical Hall and the older Theological Hall. Also worth visiting are ancient printing presses downstairs and the remains of the order's 10th-century founder, St. Norbert. ***1 hr. Strahovské nádvoří 1. 233-107-718. 80 Kč. Daily 9am–noon, 1–5pm.***

9 ★ Nový Svět. The rest of the tour is simply a stroll through the elegant Castle District. Return to Loretánské náměstí and the Černin Palace, making a left on Černinská. Follow this to the end until you come to the remote and lovely cobblestones of Nový Svět. This little lane is close to town, yet feels far away. Make a right at the end of Nový Svět onto Kanovnická, which will take you back to the start of the tour at Hradčanské náměstí. ***30 min.***

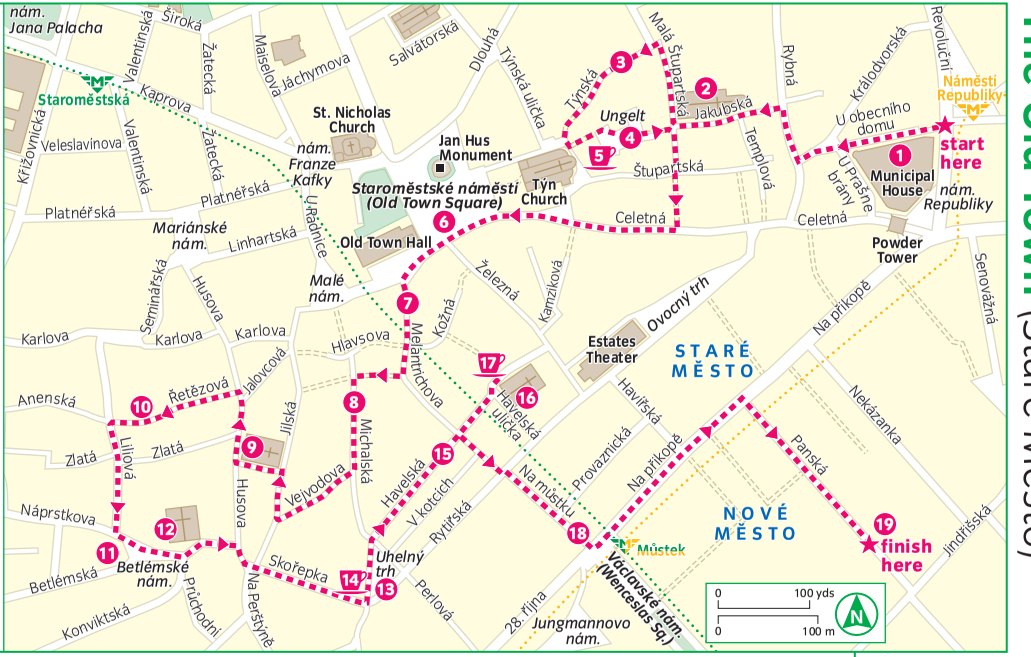
Loreta Church.

The Old Town (Staré Město)

1. Municipal House
2. St. James Basilica
3. Týnská
4. Ungelt
5. Ebel Coffee House
6. Old Town Square
7. Melantrichova
8. Michalská
9. Church of St. Giles
10. House of the Lords of Kunštát
11. Náprstek Museum of Asian, African, and American Cultures
12. Bethlehem Chapel
13. Coal Market
14. Culinaria
15. Havelský trh
16. St. Gallus Church
17. Kogo
18. Na Mustků
19. Mucha Museum

Metro stop

Pedestrian passage



The Old Town is the center of Prague and long the seat of commercial power. The main sights of the Old Town, including the Old Town Square, are covered in the "Best in One Day" tour (p 8). This tour snakes in and around the Old Town Square to see some of the lesser attractions off the beaten path. Feel free to wander at will, but be sure to bring a good map—it's easy to get lost. **START: Náměstí Republiky.**

1 ★★★ Municipal House (Obecní dům). This turn-of-the-20th-century Art Nouveau building has been an important Czech cultural symbol—the document granting independence to Czechoslovakia was signed here in 1918. The Prague Symphony Orchestra performs in Smetana Hall, the most impressive room. 🕘 *15 min. (1.5 hr. if you take a tour). See p 9, bullet 2.*

2 ★ St. James Basilica (Bazilika sv. Jakuba). Enter the heart of the Old Town along the small street U obecního domu, to the right of the Municipal House. Take a right on Rybná and then a left on Jakubská to the street Malá Štupartská. The Baroque St. James Basilica is Prague's second-longest church, with 21 altars. When you enter, look up just inside the front door. The object dangling above is the shriveled arm of a 16th-century thief. The church's enormous organ has been restored to its original sound, and St. James regularly hosts organ recitals and concerts (see chapter 8). 🕘 *15 min. Malá Štupartská 6.* ☎ *604-208-490. Mon–Sat 9:30am–noon, 2–4pm.*

3 Týnská. As you exit St. James take a right on Malá Štupartská, then follow it to Týnská, a small street on your left. This is a beautiful alleyway of Baroque houses—note the barely discernable relief on the front of no. 10. The area has gotten trendy recently, and amid the junk shops (great for browsing) you'll find some high-end antique dealers and a couple of good bars and restaurants. 🕘 *15 min.*

Art Nouveau fans should be sure to spend some time at the Municipal House.

4 ★★ Ungelt (Týnský Dvůr). Round the bend at Týnská to see the back of the magnificent Týn Church (kostel Matky Boží před Týnem). Make a left at the church and enter the Ungelt, the fortified area of the former customs house, once the seat of the city's wealth. It's hard to imagine now, but this area was allowed to fall into appalling disrepair and was restored to its present appearance only in the mid-1990s. Now, the Ungelt holds an appealing mix of upscale shops and restaurants. 🕘 *20 min.*

The Ungelt.

5 **Ebel Coffee House.** If you're starting to flag, stop by this excellent coffeehouse for American-style espresso-based drinks and light food items such as bagels and cakes. *Týn 2.* ☎ *224-895-788. $.*

6 ★★★ **Old Town Square (Staroměstské nám.).** Continue walking through the Ungelt, exiting through the gate on the other side. Make a right on Malá Štupartská and follow it to the right, connecting with Celetná and eventually entering Old Town Square on the same road used by Bohemian kings 500 years ago. The "Best in One Day" tour, p 8, covers the square's main sights, so for this tour we'll simply stroll through the square, walking to the left of the Old Town Hall (Staroměstská radnice) and finding Melantrichová, a small street just opposite the Astronomical Clock. 🕘 *15 min.*

Melantrichová.

7 ★ **Melantrichová.** This tiny lane connects the city's two main squares (Old Town and Wenceslas) and for that reason is clogged night and day. The usual selection of glass and T-shirt shops line this street. Don't miss the "House at the Two Golden Bears" (Dům u dvou zlatých medvědů), on the corner with Kožná. It has one of the city's most beautiful Renaissance portals, dating from 1590. 🕘 *10 min.*

8 **Michalská.** Turn right through an arcade to enter Michalská street, once one of the main arteries of the Old Town. Art galleries, high-end antiques shops, and the luxurious Iron Gate Hotel (p 141) line this picturesque street. 🕘 *15 min.*

9 ★ **Church of St. Giles (Sv. Jiljí).** Follow Michalská nearly to the end, turning right under an archway onto Vejvodová. Turn right again onto Jilská (unmarked) and follow it to the back of this enormous church. St.

Giles was a Hussite church during the 15th-century religious strife, but was given a thorough Baroque makeover after the Austrian Hapsburg occupation. Today, it has perhaps the most opulent interior of any Prague church save St. Nicholas. The Sunday noon mass is popular with the city's growing Polish community. 🕘 *15 min. Husová 8. No phone. Daily 9am–5pm (except during masses).*

Church of St. Giles.

10 House of the Lords of Kunštát (Dům Pánů z Kunštátu). From St. Giles, walk down Husová until you see a small street running to the left called Řetězová. Look for no. 3, one of the oldest houses in Old Town; it dates from 1200 and has some of the city's best-preserved Romanesque chambers. The house was rebuilt in the 15th century in Gothic style and served as an occasional residence for the Hussite King George of Poděbrady. Today it houses occasional exhibitions. 🕘 *10 min. Řetězová 3. No phone.*

11 Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures (Náprstkovo Muzeum). Continue along Řetězová, making a left onto Liliová and following that to Bethlehem Square (Betlémské nám.). On the right hand of the square, you'll see the National Museum's collection of primitive, non-European cultures housed in a former brewery. The exhibitions are dry, but the museum has a popular section on North American Indians. 🕘 *30 min. Betlémské nám. 1.* ☎ *224-497-500. 80 Kč. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm.*

12 ★★ Bethlehem Chapel (Betlémská kaple). To the left on the square is the real attraction, the Bethlehem Chapel. In the 15th century this was once home to the firebrand Czech Protestant theologian Jan Hus. Hus was burned at the stake as a heretic in 1415 in Constanz in what is now Germany, and became a martyr for the Czech Protestant and later nationalist cause. The chapel was completed in 1394 but thoroughly reconstructed in the 1950s. In the main hall you can see the pulpit from where Hus preached. 🕘 *30 min.*

Bethlehem Chapel.

Betlémské nám. 4. ☎ 224-248-595. 40 Kč. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm.

13 Coal Market (Uhelný trh). Follow Betlémská out of the square, turning right onto Na Perštýně. Be sure to look up at this point to see Czech artist David Černý's "Hanging Man" statue hanging high above Husová. Cross the street and follow Skořepká into what was once the city's main coal market, marked by a tiny statue in the middle. 🕘 *10 min.*

14 Culinaria. If it's lunchtime and a nice day, pick up some sandwiches-to-go at this popular deli situated on the corner of Skořepká and Uhelný trh. The smoothies and coffee drinks are some of the best in town. Eat at tables outside or on benches around the statue at the center of market. *Skořepká 9. ☎ 224-231-017. $.*

15 ★ Havelský trh. From the Coal Market, walk up busy Havelská street. The "Havel Market" was the area's commercial center during the Middle Ages and remains a popular market. The stalls here sell everything from fruits and vegetables to drinks, soap, artwork, and leather goods. Prices here are generally lower than in most shops. 🕘 *20 min.*

St. Gallus Church.

16 ★ St. Gallus Church (Kostel sv. Havla). This dignified church, sometimes called St. Havel Church, dominates the end of the square. It dates from the 13th century and is one of the oldest in the Old Town. Jan Hus was an occasional preacher here. The chapel holds the tomb of Bohemian Baroque artist Karel Škréta. It's now undergoing long-term renovation and may not be open when you visit. 🕘 *10 min. Havelská ul. No phone. Daily 10am–5pm.*

17 Kogo. This branch of the wildly popular local chain of good pizzas and homemade pastas is perfect for lunch or dinner, or just a glass of good wine. The house specialty is a dry red called Vranac that's imported from Montenegro. *Havelská 27. ☎ 224-210-259. $$.*

18 Na Mustků. From St. Gallus church return in the direction of Havelský trh and turn left on Melantrichová. This brings you back to Mustek metro station and the base of Wenceslas Square. The name "Na Mustků" means "on the little bridge" and refers to the days when this was a small bridge crossing a moat, linking the Old Town (Staré Město) and the New Town (Nové Město). You can still see parts of the original foundation downstairs inside the metro station. 🕘 *10 min.*

19 ★★ Mucha Museum. If you've got the time and energy for one last sight (and you're a fan of Art Nouveau), turn left on Na příkopě and walk several blocks until you reach Panská ul. on the right. This museum is dedicated to Czech artist and illustrator Alfons Mucha, who became world famous for his Parisian prints of the actress Sarah Bernhardt. The small collection includes some original paintings, drawings, and poster art. 🕘 *45 min. Panská 7. ☎ 221-451-333. 120 Kč. Daily 10am–6pm.*

4 The Best **Shopping**

Shopping Best Bets

Best for **Philatelists**
Alfafila, *Václavské nám. 28 (Pasáž U Stýblů) (p 74)*

Best Place to **Find Old Maps**
★ Antikvariát Pařížská, *Pařížská 8 (p 74)*

Best Place to **Buy a Miniature Wooden Rocking Horse**
★ Hračky, *Loretánské nám. 3 (p 75)*

Best Place to **Buy a Marionette**
★★★ Truhlář Marionety, *U Lužického semináře 5 (p 76)*

Best **Bohemian Crystal**
★★★ Moser, *Na příkopě 12 (p 77)*

Best **Contemporary Glass**
★★★ Artěl, *Celetná 29 (p 76)*

Best **Old-World Shopping Center**
★★★ Lucerna Pasáž, *Štěpánská 61 (p 78)*

Best **Department Store in a Brutalist Building**
Kotva, *Náměstí Republiky 8 (p 77)*

Best Place for **English-Language Books**
★★ Shakespeare & Sons, *Krymská 12 (p 79)*

Best **Bookstore/Coffeehouse**
★★ The Globe Bookstore and Coffeehouse, *Pštrossová 6 (p 79)*

Best **Czech Clothing Designers**
★★★ Timoure et Groupe, *V kolkovně 6 (p 79)*

Best **Deli**
★★ Culinaria, *Skořepká 9 (p 80)*

Best **Bath Salts & Massage Lotions**
★★ Botanicus, *Týn 3 (p 80)*

Best Place to **Buy a Cubist Couch**
★★★ Modernista, *Celetná 12 (p 81)*

Best Place to **Buy a Real Czech Garnet**
★★ Studio Šperk, *Dlouhá 19 (p 82)*

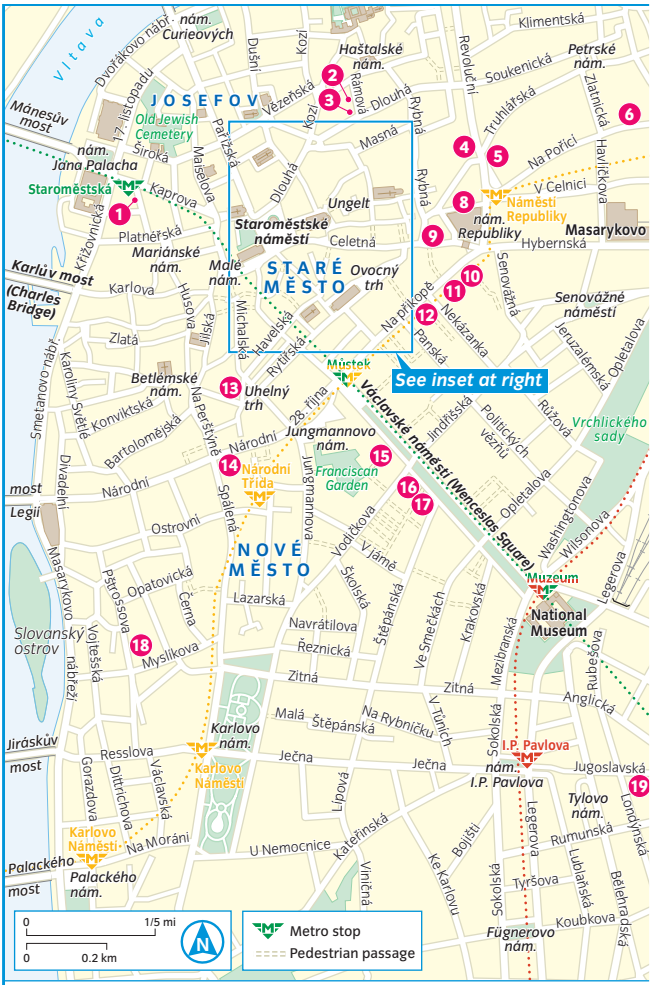
Colorful wooden toys at Manufaktura.

Malá Strana Area Shopping

Hračky 3
Hunt Kastner Artworks 2
Marionety 4
Nový Smichov 6
Robertson's 1
Truhlář Marionety 5

Photo page 69: Shop window on Golden Lane.

Staré Město Area Shopping


Vltava
Dvořákovo náb.
nám. Curieových
Dušní
Kozí
Haštalské nám.
Revoluční
Soukenická
Petrské nám.
Klimentská
Zlatnická
Havlíčkova
Truhlářská
Rybná
Masná
Dlouhá
Celetná
Ovocný trh
Ungelt
Na Poříčí
V Celnici
Náměstí Republiky
Masarykovo
Hybernská
Senovážná
Senovážné náměstí
Jeruzalémská
Opletalova
Nekázanka
Na Příkopě
Panská
Jindřišská
Poštovských věží
Růžová
Vrchlického sady
Washingtonova
Wilsonova
Legerova
Muzeum
National Museum
Rubešova
Anglická
Mezibranská
Krakovská
Ve Smečkách
Štěpánská
Školská
Vodičkova
Jungmannova
Jungmannovo nám.
Václavské náměstí (Wenceslas Square)
Franciscan Garden
Národní třída
Národní
Spálená
Na Perštýně
Uhelný trh
28. října
Betlémské nám.
Betlémská
Karolíny Světlé
Konviktská
Bartolomějská
Divadelní
Ostrovní
Lazarská
Navrátilova
Řeznická
Zitná
Malá Štěpánská
Na Rybníčku
V Tůních
Sokolská
Ječná
I.P. Pavlova nám.
Jugoslavská
Londýnská
Rumunská
Lublaňská
Bělehradská
Tylovo nám.
Tyršova
Koubkova
Fügnerovo nám.
Ke Karlovu
Bolíšti
Lipová
Kateřinská
U Nemocnice
Viničná
Na Moráni
Resslova
Gorazdova
Dittrichova
Václavská
Karlovo nám.
Karlovo Náměstí
Palackého nám.
Palackého most
Jiráskův most
Mánesův most
Legií most
Slovanský ostrov
Vojtěšská nábř.
Masarykovo nábř.
Petrohradská
Opatovická
Černá
Myslíkova
Jilská
Husova
Karlova
Mariánské nám.
Platnerská
Křižovnická
Karlův most (Charles Bridge)
Staroměstská
Kaprova
nám. Jana Palacha
Široká
Pařížská
Maiselova
Dlouhá
Michalská
Havelská
Rytířská
Celetná
Staroměstské náměstí
Malé nám.
Mánesův most
17. listopadu
Vězeňská
Kozí
Nám. Curieových
Nám. Haštalské
Nám. Republiky
Nám. I.P. Pavlova
Nám. Jana Palacha
Nám. Karlovo
Nám. Karlovo Náměstí
Nám. Uhelný trh
Nám. Václavské náměstí
Nám. Jungmannovo
Nám. Národní třída
Nám. Betlémské
Nám. Staroměstské
Nám. Malé
Nám. Mariánské
Nám. Palackého
Nám. Fügnerovo
Nám. Tylovo
Nám. Senovážné
Nám. Poříčí
Nám. Masarykovo
Nám. Jungmannovo
Nám. Franciscan Garden
Nám. Ovocný trh
Nám. Celetná
Nám. Ungelt
Nám. Havlíčkova
Nám. Zlatnická
Nám. Petrské
Nám. Klimentská
Nám. Revoluční
Nám. Soukenická
Nám. Truhlářská
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Nám. Havelská
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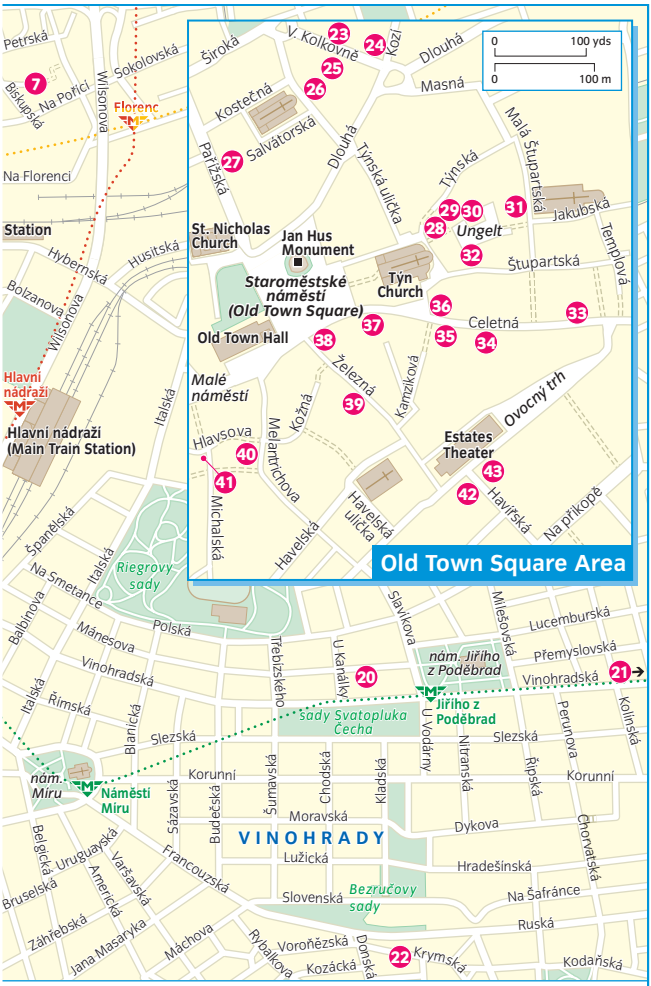
Nám. Celetná
Nám. Ovocný trh
Nám. Ungelt
Nám. Na Příkopě
Nám. Nekázanka
Nám. Panská
Nám. Jindřišská
Nám. Poštovských věží
Nám. Růžová
Nám. Vrchlického sady
Nám. Washingtonova
Nám. Wilsonova
Nám. Legerova
Nám. Muzeum
Nám. National Museum
Nám. Rubešova
Nám. Anglická
Nám. Mezibranská
Nám. Krakovská
Nám. Ve Smečkách
Nám. Štěpánská
Nám. Školská
Nám. Vodičkova
Nám. Jungmannova
Nám. Václavské náměstí (Wenceslas Square)
Nám. Franciscan Garden
Nám. Národní třída
Nám. Národní
Nám. Spálená
Nám. Na Perštýně
Nám. Uhelný trh
Nám. 28. října
Nám. Betlémské
Nám. Betlémská
Nám. Karolíny Světlé
Nám. Konviktská
Nám. Bartolomějská
Nám. Divadelní
Nám. Ostrovní
Nám. Lazarská
Nám. Navrátilova
Nám. Řeznická
Nám. Zitná
Nám. Malá Štěpánská
Nám. Na Rybníčku
Nám. V Tůních
Nám. Sokolská
Nám. Ječná
Nám. I.P. Pavlova
Nám. Jugoslavská
Nám. Londýnská
Nám. Tylovo
Nám. Rumunská
Nám. Lublaňská
Nám. Bělehradská
Nám. Tyršova
Nám. Koubkova
Nám. Fügnerovo
Nám. Ke Karlovu
Nám. Bolíšti
Nám. Lipová
Nám. Kateřinská
Nám. U Nemocnice
Nám. Viničná
Nám. Na Moráni
Nám. Resslova
Nám. Gorazdova
Nám. Dittrichova
Nám. Václavská
Nám. Karlovo nám.
Nám. Karlovo Náměstí
Nám. Palackého nám.
Nám. Palackého most
Nám. Jiráskův most
Nám. Mánesův most
Nám. Legií most
Nám. Slovanský ostrov
Nám. Vojtěšská nábř.
Nám. Masarykovo nábř.
Nám. Petrohradská
Nám. Opatovická
Nám. Černá
Nám. Myslíkova
Nám. Jilská
Nám. Husova
Nám. Karlova
Nám. Mariánské nám.
Nám. Platnerská
Nám. Křižovnická
Nám. Karlův most (Charles Bridge)
Nám. Staroměstská
Nám. Kaprova
Nám. nám. Jana Palacha
Nám. Široká
Nám. Pařížská
Nám. Maiselova
Nám. Dlouhá
Nám. Michalská
Nám. Havelská
Nám. Rytířská
Nám. Celetná
Nám. Staroměstské náměstí
Nám. Malé nám.
Nám. Mánesův most
Nám. 17. listopadu
Nám. Vězeňská
Nám. Kozí
Nám. Nám. Curieových
Nám. Nám. Haštalské
Nám. Nám. Republiky
Nám. Nám. I.P. Pavlova
Nám. Nám. Jana Palacha
Nám. Nám. Karlovo
Nám. Nám. Karlovo Náměstí
Nám. Nám. Uhelný trh
Nám. Nám. Václavské náměstí
Nám. Nám. Jungmannovo
Nám. Nám. Národní třída
Nám. Nám. Betlémské
Nám. Nám. Staroměstské
Nám. Nám. Malé
Nám. Nám. Mariánské
Nám. Nám. Palackého
Nám. Nám. Fügnerovo
Nám. Nám. Tylovo
Nám. Nám. Senovážné
Nám. Nám. Poříčí
Nám. Nám. Masarykovo
Nám. Nám. Jungmannovo
Nám. Nám. Franciscan Garden
Nám. Nám. Ovocný trh
Nám. Nám. Celetná
Nám. Nám. Ungelt
Nám. Nám. Havlíčkova
Nám. Nám. Zlatnická
Nám. Nám. Petrské
Nám. Nám. Klimentská
Nám. Nám. Revoluční
Nám. Nám. Soukenická
Nám. Nám. Truhlářská
Nám. Nám. Rybná
Nám. Nám. Masná
Nám. Nám. Dlouhá
Nám. Nám. Dušní
Nám. Nám. Kozí
Nám. Nám. Vězeňská
Nám. Nám. Kaprova
Nám. Nám. Široká
Nám. Nám. Maiselova
Nám. Nám. Pařížská
Nám. Nám. Michalská
Nám. Nám. Havelská
Nám. Nám. Rytířská
Nám. Nám. Celetná
Nám. Nám. Staroměstské
Nám. Nám. Malé
Nám. Nám. Mánesův most
Nám. Nám. 17. listopadu
Nám. Nám. Vězeňská
Nám.



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Prague Shopping A to Z

Antikvariát Pařižská.

Antiquarian Books & Maps

Alfafila NOVÉ MĚSTO A specialist shop in a small passageway off Václavské náměstí catering mainly to stamp collectors, but with an absorbing collection of old postcards, posters, and photographs that should keep noncollectors happy too. ***Václavské nám. 28 (Pasáž U Stýblů). ☎ 224-235-457. MC, V. Metro: Mustek. Map p 72.***

★★ **Antikvariát Karel Křenek** STARÉ MĚSTO The Art Nouveau setting of this shop's location in the Obecní dům building brings an elegant, upmarket tone. Especially strong on German-language antiquarian books and Eastern European and Hapsburg-era maps. ***U Obecního domu 8. ☎ 222-314-734. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 72.***

★ **Antikvariát Pařížská** STARÉ MĚSTO Small shop on one of the most exclusive streets in the city, with a beautiful selection of older maps and prints. Despite the location, the prices here are not really much higher than elsewhere, and the quality of the goods is among the best you'll find. ***Pařížská 8. ☎ 222-321-442. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

Antiques & Collectibles

★ **Alma Antiques** STARÉ MĚSTO Family-owned and fascinating antiques store/junk shop, with an eclectic range of housewares, bric-a-brac, rugs, clothes, accessories, and just about everything else. If you don't see what you're looking for, ask. They have several stores and storage areas around town and can probably find it. ***Valentinská 7. ☎ 222-325-865. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

★ **Art Deco Galerie** STARÉ MĚSTO Cozy shop on a quiet street in Old Town that focuses on signature pieces from the interwar years, when Czechoslovakia, under the First Republic, was one of the world's wealthiest countries. Good collections of glass, personal accessories, small pieces of furniture, and secondhand clothing. ***Michalská 21. ☎ 224-223-076. MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

★★ **Dorotheum** STARÉ MĚSTO The local branch of the fabled Austrian auction house of the same name. As you can imagine, the goods on offer—jewelry, furniture, and artwork—are some of the best on the market, at prices to match. Excellent 19th-century collections. Good selection of antique jewelry. ***Ovocný trh 2. ☎ 224-216-699. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Mustek. Map p 72.***

★★ **Starožitnosti Ungelt** STARÉ MĚSTO Recognized around Prague as one of the best stores for antique glass, ceramics, and jewelry. Prices here are a little higher than most, but the selection is much better. *Týn 1. ☎ 224-895-454. MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.*

Art Galleries

★★ **Galerie Art Praha** STARÉ MĚSTO Impressive gallery on Old Town Square with a focus on 19th- and 20th-century paintings by Czech and Slovak artists. Always something eye-catching in the window. Strong on art during the communist period. *Staroměstské nám. 20. ☎ 224-211-087. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.*

★★ **Hunt Kastner Artworks** LETNÁ This expat-owned contemporary gallery focuses on emerging Czech artists working in a range of visual media. The two small exhibition rooms hold rotating collections. Open in the afternoon Tuesday to Friday or by appointment. *Kamenická 22. ☎ 233-376-259. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Vltavská (plus trams 1, 25, or 26). Map p 71.*

★★ **Jiří Švestka** NOVÉ MESTO Widely considered the leading private gallery in Prague, with a stable of mostly cutting-edge Czech artists and some internationals. There's also a bookshop here with a good selection of art and architecture titles. *Biskupský dvůr 6. ☎ 222-311-092. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 72.*

Children: Toys & Puppets

★ **Hračky** HRADČANY Excellent collection of vintage, decidedly low-tech Czech toys, including the signature little wooden rocking horse. It feels like it's from a different age entirely; sure to be a delight for little kids. *Loretánské nám. 3. ☎ 603-515-745. No credit cards. Metro: Hradčanská. Map p 71.*

★★ **Marionety** MALÁ STRANA Many stores in Prague carry marionettes and puppets, but only a few—such as this place—carry genuine, handmade marionettes from traditional designs. The better ones are not cheap, but the craftsmanship is some of the best you'll find. *Nerudová 51. ☎ 257-533-035. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 71.*

★ **Sparky's** NOVÉ MĚSTO The largest toy store in the city, with a convenient central location. Has a great selection of stuffed animals on the ground floor. Toys for older kids, including lots of model cars, are on the upper floors. Gift-wrapping

Galerie Art Praha.

available. *Havířská 2. ☎ 224-239-309. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 72.*

★★★ **Truhlář Marionety** MALÁ STRANA Well-regarded puppet shop that eschews cheap machine-made marionettes in favor of the handmade, labor-intensive variety. Marionettes have a tradition in Prague going back to the Middle Ages and many of the witch, king, and nobleman motifs here have been in use for centuries. *U Lužického semináře 5. ☎ 602-689-918. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 71.*

China, Crystal & Porcelain

★★★ **Artěl** STARÉ MĚSTO American expat Karen Feldman has carved a niche for herself in the high-end glass market by adapting classic Czech designs to modern tastes. Previously, she's sold her designs through department stores like Bloomingdales in New York and Harrods in London. In 2007, she opened up this local flagship on Prague's "glass avenue," Celetná. *Celetná 29. ☎ 224-815-085. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 72.*

★★ **Celetná Crystal** STARÉ MĚSTO Probably the city's largest collection of crystal and cut glass on several floors in a prominent Functionalist-era building from the early 1930s. Several elegant showrooms. The staff is happy to walk you through the collections. *Celetná 15. ☎ 222-324-022. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 72.*

★ **Cristallino** STARÉ MĚSTO Similar to but slightly cheaper than Celetná Crystal (see above) across the street. Has a broad selection of Bohemian lead crystal glasses and vases, as well as more modern-looking pieces and a large collection of glass eggs. *Celetná 12. ☎ 224-223-027. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 72.*

★ **Dům Porcelánu** VINOHRADY In addition to crystal, the Czech Republic is renowned for porcelain—much of it made in or near the spa town of Karlovy Vary. At this large shop in Vinohrady, you'll find designs from all of the leading Czech producers—at prices that haven't been marked up for tourists. *Jugoslávská 16. ☎ 221-505-320. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Miru. Map p 72.*

Marionety.

Dům Porcelánu.

★★★ **Moser** NOVÉ MĚSTO The leading Bohemian producer of luxury cut class, crystal, stemware, and vases for 150 years. The company's gorgeous 1920s showroom on Na příkopě in central Prague is worth a visit on its own, just to see the glass in its proper setting. A perfect gift for someone back home. ***Na příkopě 12. ☎ 224-211-293. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Mustek. Map p 72.***

★★ **Swarovski** STARÉ MĚSTO The "Austrian" glassmaker who originally founded this world-famous lead crystal maker, Daniel Swarovski, was actually from a small town in Bohemia. So in a way it's fitting to have such a beautiful store in the center of Prague. The selection here is excellent, but the prices are similar to or higher than what you'll find anywhere else in the world. ***Celetná 11. ☎ 222-315-585. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

Department Stores & Shopping Centers

Bílá Labut' NOVÉ MĚSTO Similar to Kotva but even emptier. The lifeless stalls and shoddy merchandise on offer are actually a better display of life under Communism than anything you're likely to see at the Museum of Communism. Worth a stop if only to gauge how far the city has come in 20 years. ***Na poříčí 23. ☎ 224-811-364. MC, V. Metro: Florenc. Map p 72.***

Kotva STARÉ MĚSTO This communist-era department store still feels stuck in the 1970s—and might be more interesting because of it. It's adequate for basic purchases, such as housewares, toiletries, and stationery, but give the clothes and shoes a miss. The Brutalist-style building is protected as a cultural monument. ***Náměstí Republiky 8. ☎ 224-801-111. AE, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 72.***

Crystal pieces from Moser.

The unusual upside-down horse sculpture at Lucerna Pasaž.

★★★ **Lucerna Pasáž** NOVÉ MĚSTO Funky 1930s-era shopping center stuffed with an absolutely indescribable mix of stores. There are shops selling high Czech fashion, wines, gifts, and even vintage cameras. The main attractions here are the early-modern interior, the elegant Lucerna cinema and cafe, and the wacky David Černý statue of St. Wenceslas riding on an upside-down horse. One of a kind. ***Štěpánská 61. ☎ 224-224-537. Metro: Mustek. Map p 72.***

★ **Nový Smíchov** SMÍCHOV Big American-style shopping mall with more than 100 stores. The highlights here are a large Tesco supermarket (one of the best in the city) on the ground floor, a big food court on top, and a multiplex cinema that's heavy on Hollywood blockbusters. ***Plzenská 8. ☎ 257-284-111. Metro: Anděl. Map p 71.***

★ **Palác Flora** VINOHRADY Similar to the Nový Smíchov (see above), with more than 100 stores and a large multiplex cinema. Has the city's—and country's—only 3-D IMAX Theater. Convenient to the metro (A line). ***Vinohradská 151. ☎ 255-741-700. Metro: Flora. Map p 72.***

★★ **Palladium** NOVÉ MĚSTO This brand-new high-tech supermall is just off of Náměstí Republiky (across from Kotva). Several floors of high-end stores, with a huge, elaborate—and very expensive—food court on top. ***Náměstí Republiky 1. ☎ 225-770-250. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 72.***

★★ **Slovanský dům** NOVÉ MĚSTO Convenient, centrally located shopping center with a number of leading-brand clothing stores, like Mexx, Tommy Hilfiger, and Nautica. The 10-screen multiplex cinema is committed to showing films in English, and is one of the few cinemas in town to regularly carry Czech movies subtitled in English. ***Na příkopě 22. ☎ 221-451-400. Metro: Mustek. Map p 72.***

Tesco NOVÉ MĚSTO Local outlet of the British retailer that's housed in another noteworthy 1970s building. For anyone familiar with Tesco in the U.K., the goods on offer are a tremendous disappointment. Like Kotva, it's fine for basics, but you'll look high and low for anything of really decent quality. The grocery store in the basement is handy for picnic provisions. ***Národní třída 26. ☎ 222-003-111. MC, V. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 72.***

English Books & Magazines

★★ **Anagram** STARÉ MĚSTO Tiny English-language bookshop with an impressive display of art and photography books. Also stocks a nice range of high-end contemporary fiction. Great for browsing. ***Týn 4. ☎ 224-895-737. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

★★ **Big Ben Bookshop** STARÉ MĚSTO Small English-language bookstore with a very good selection of quality fiction, history, and travel guides. Also stocks a small

number of hard-to-find magazines like the *New York Review of Books* and the *New Yorker.* Stop by to pick up some reads for the flight back home. ***Malá Štupartská 5. ☎ 224-826-565. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 72.***

★★ The Globe Bookstore and Coffeehouse NOVÉ MĚSTO New ownership has invigorated the Globe's stock of new books, and it's now arguably the best bookstore in town for English-language fiction and Czech and Eastern European authors in translation. Popular with expats. Computers on-hand for checking e-mail and an excellent cafe-restaurant in the back. ***Pštrossová 6. ☎ 224-934-203. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 72.***

★★ Shakespeare & Sons VRŠOVICE Wonderfully eclectic used bookstore that's worth a special trip to the outlying district of Vršovice. Thousands of books in all categories and a laid-back atmosphere highly conducive to browsing. Good cafe on the premises. Recommended. ***Krymská 12. ☎ 271-740-839. MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Miru (plus tram). Map p 72.***

Fashion

★★★ Boheme STARÉ MĚSTO Simple yet fashionable women's clothing designed with younger women in mind. Skirts, tops, jackets, boots, and accessories at decent prices. Friendly, accommodating staff. ***Dušní 8. ☎ 224-813-840. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

★ Helena Fejková Design NOVÉ MĚSTO One of the first Czech female designers to emerge after the 1989 revolution. The quality of the clothing is very good, but the styles and designs are playful to the point of being unwearable. ***Štěpánská 61 (inside the Lucerna Pasáž). ☎ 224-211-514. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Mustek. Map p 72.***

★ Ivana Follová Art and Fashion STARÉ MĚSTO Highly influential local designer in her 50s. The women's clothes vary from functional to folly, but are well-made. The Týn shop is worth poking around in—not just clothes, but interesting designer jewelry and glass. ***Týn 1. ☎ 224-895-460. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

★★★ Report's STARÉ MĚSTO Exclusive well-made Italian clothing for men. Everything from top-of-the-line suits and jackets to shoes, sweaters, belts, and accessories. The showroom is reminiscent of a posh men's club and the service is excellent. ***V kolkovně 5. ☎ 222-329-823. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

★★★ Timoure et Groupe TEG STARÉ MĚSTO The name sounds French, but this is the creation of two Czech designers who make sophisticated, wearable women's clothing that's perfect for the office and then for dinner after. ***V kolkovně 6. ☎ 222-327-358. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

Helena Fejková.

Food

★★★ **Aromi** VINOHRADY Brought to you by the folks who run the highly rated Aromi restaurant (p 98) across the street. The spot for perfectly ripened Italian cheeses as well as breads, antipasto, sauces, and lots more. Stop in for a take-away pack before that overnight train and you'll ride away in luxury. *Mánesová 83. ☎ 222-725-514. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Jiřího z Poděbrad. Map p 72.*

★★ **Bakeshop Praha** NOVÉ MĚSTO America-inspired bakery featuring freshly prepared sandwiches, soups, and salads, as well as some of the city's best cookies, cakes, and brownies. Good coffee drinks. Eat in or take away. *Kozí 1. ☎ 222-316-823. MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.*

★★ **Culinaria** STARÉ MĚSTO The most enticing deli case in Prague, filled with goodies like beef Wellington and grilled salmon that you can eat in or take away. Also offers made-to-order sandwiches and salads, as well as fresh smoothies and coffee drinks. There's a small retail business, where homesick Americans can stock up on goodies such as Oreo cookies and Pop-Tarts at about double what they'd pay at home.

Aromi.

Skořepká 9. ☎ 224-231-017. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 72.

★ **Robertson's** STARÉ MĚSTO English-style butcher that's evolved into an all-purpose refuge for homesick Brits and Americans. Excellent steaks and chops cut to suit foreign tastes, but also an excellent range of things like cake mixes, breakfast cereals, hard-to-find baking ingredients, snacks, and beverages. Probably not worth a stop if you're just passing through, but a must if you plan on staying a while. *Jugoslávských partyzánů 38. ☎ 233-321-142. MC, V. Metro: Dejvická. Map p 71.*

Gifts & Souvenirs

★★ **Botanicus** STARÉ MĚSTO A Czech original that's as impressive as it is hard to describe. Sells all-natural products for the bath and kitchen such as bath oils, soaps, shampoos, and cooking oils—all made from ingredients grown locally. Botanicus has several outlets across the city, but this one in Old Town seems to be the best. You'll probably fall in love with everything, and want to stuff your suitcase until it can no longer close. *Týn 3. ☎ 234-767-446. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.*

★★ **Manufaktura** NOVÉ MĚSTO This shop is similar to—and probably inspired by—Botanicus, but there's less of a focus here on bath and food items and more on traditional Czech crafts, like lace, wooden toys, coffee mugs, textiles, and even pieces of clothing, like scarves and sweaters. Everything feels all-natural and environmentally friendly. The packaging is so nice, it's like it's been gift-wrapped for you. *Melantrichova 17. ☎ 221-632-480. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.*

Qubus.

Home Furnishings

★★★ **Modernista** STARÉ MĚSTO
Eye-catching collection of furniture and accessories extolling the design virtues of Cubism, functionalism, and mid-century modern. You'll find a mix of antiques and reproductions. Many of the items here are too large to fit in a suitcase, but it's certainly worth dropping in to take a look. ***Celetná 12. ☎ 224-241-300. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 72.***

★★★ **Qubus** STARÉ MĚSTO
The epicenter of Prague cool when it comes to decorative objects for the home and office. Arty, arch glassware, plates, vases, and lots of other one-of-a-kinds. Also stocks vintage cameras like the cult classic, all-plastic Holga. ***Rámová 3. ☎ 222-313-151. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

All This and a Burberry Too . . .

During the past few years, Prague has become a much more interesting city for buying clothes and accessories—especially if you're a woman. Credit for that goes mainly to the international chains, which have come here to capitalize on both Czechs' rising personal incomes and—of course—the thousands of tourists. Pařížská, just off of Old Town Square, is home to the ultra-high-end. Here you'll find **Hermès** (Pařížská 12, ☎ **224-817-545**), **Burberry** (Pařížská 11, ☎ **222-317-445**), **Louis Vuitton** (Pařížská 13, ☎ **224-812-774**), and other similarly vaunted names. If you're looking for something with a little more street smarts, head to Na příkopě, the pedestrian zone between Old Town (Staré Město) and New Town (Nové Město). This is where you'll find **Zara's** big flagship store (Na příkopě 15, ☎ **224-239-861**), with separate floors for men's, women's, and children's clothing. **Mango** (Na příkopě 15, ☎ **224-218-884**)—women only—is right across the street. Europe's current hottest high-street fashion outlet, **H&M** (Václavské nám. 19, ☎ **234-656-051**), is just a short walk up Václavské náměstí.

Garnet necklaces from Český Granát.

Jewelry

★ **Český Granát** STARÉ MĚSTO
You'll see lots of amber outlets in the touristy parts of Prague, but the *echt* Czech gemstone is a deep red garnet, mined in the northern and eastern parts of the country. This centrally located shop focuses almost exclusively on garnets and has an excellent selection of rings, necklaces, bracelets, and broaches. ***Celetná 4. ☎ 224-228-281. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

★★ **Studio Šperk** STARÉ MĚSTO
Most of the jewelry stores in town are unnecessarily conservative, and that's especially true of garnet dealers. This little studio/boutique off of Old Town Square takes chances with more contemporary settings and unique designs. The store takes pride in offering only the highest-quality, genuine Bohemian garnets. ***Dlouhá 19. ☎ 224-815-161. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 72.***

Contemporary pieces from Studio Šperk.

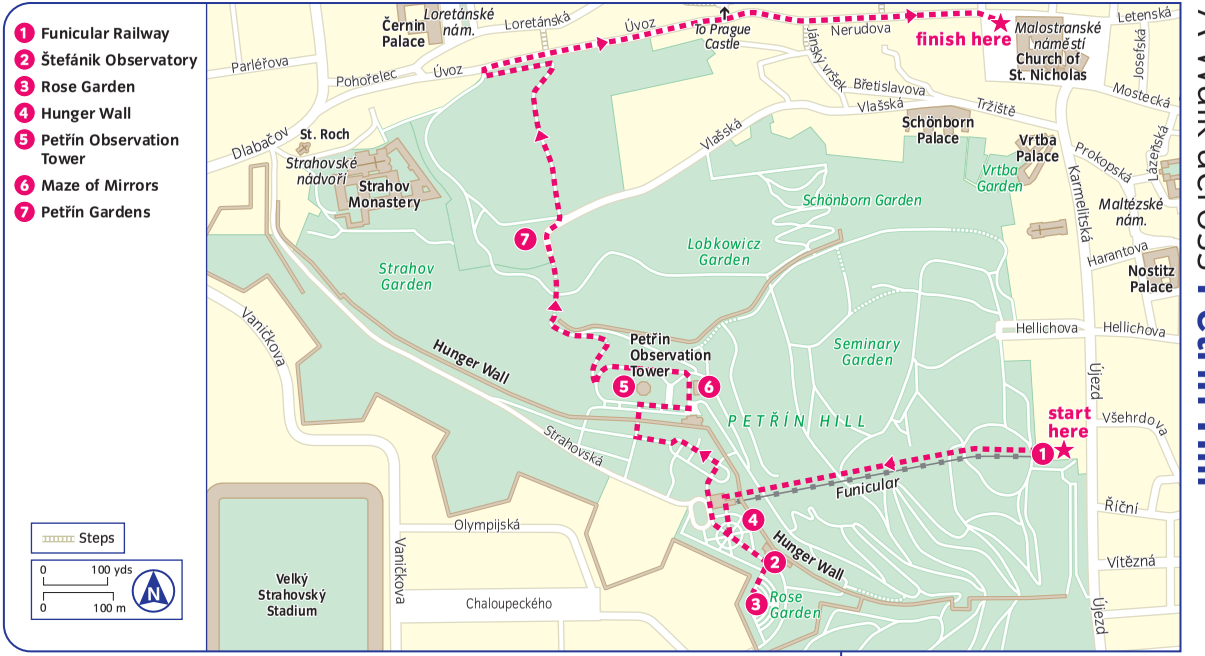
Perfume & Makeup

★★ **Estée Lauder** STARÉ MĚSTO
This highly rated local beauty salon sells Estée Lauder products and offers services like warm-stones therapy to help customers relax and de-stress. ***Železná 18. ☎ 224-232-023. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Mustek. Map p 72.***

★★ **Marionnaud Parfumeries** NOVÉ MĚSTO
This welcoming store in the Slovanský dům shopping center carries a full range of international perfumes and cosmetics. The emphasis here is on self-service, meaning you're free to browse and try on scents with minimum staff intrusion. ***Na příkopě 22. ☎ 221-451-243. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Mustek. Map p 72.*** ●

5 The Best of the **Outdoors**

A Walk across **Petřín Hill**



Previous page: Petřín Hill peak.

There are lots of lookout spots in this city of a hundred spires that boast of having the best views. Certainly, the beer garden at Letenský zámeček, in Letná (see p 88) has a legitimate claim. But for my money, nothing beats the Prague panorama as seen from the top of the long, sloping valley that runs from the top of Petřín Hill down toward the banks of the Vltava river. This walk begins with a funicular train ride to the top of the hill. The smattering of interesting sights up here include a miniature Eiffel Tower built for the 1891 Prague Jubilee exhibition. After that it's a peaceful stroll through a lovely park and then out across a long meadow, with those vaunted views over Prague Castle and the city below. **START: The funicular station at the Újezd tram stop. From Malostranská metro station, take tram no. 12, 22, or 23 three stops. On exiting the tram, walk back toward Malostranské nám. about 15m (49 ft.).**

1 ★ kids Funicular Railway (lanová dráha). This 488m (1,600-ft.) cable railway is part of the city's public transportation system; you'll need a 20 Kč tram ticket to ride it (tram and metro passes work too). The funicular was originally built to ferry passengers to the 1891 exhibition. Now, it's a mainstay of the tourist industry, taking visitors up to the "Eiffel Tower" or hauling concertgoers or sports fans up to an event at giant Strahov Stadium on top of the hill. The line has two stops; take it to the top, Petřín station. If you'd rather walk up the hill, follow any of the paths leading upward. Figure on a moderately demanding hike of 25 to 30 minutes. 🕘 *15 min. Daily 9am–11:20pm.*

Enjoy the views from a funicular ride to the top of Petřín Hill.

2 ★ kids Štefánik Observatory (Štefánikova hvězdárna). As you exit the funicular station, walk to your left to see this still-functioning observatory with a classic Zeiss telescope from the 1920s. In good weather, you can look through the telescope for views of the sun during the day and of the moon, planets, and stars at night. 🕘 *10 min. 1 hr. if you stop to observe. Petřín 205.* ☎ *257-320-540. 50 Kč. Mon–Fri 2–7pm, 9–11pm; Sat–Sun 10am–noon, 2–7pm, 9–11pm.*

3 Rose Garden. This sprawling, very pretty rose garden stands just in front of the Štefánik Observatory and meanders in and around Petřín Hill. Take some time to relax on a bench with a book and people-watch. Popular with seniors on Sunday afternoons. 🕘 *15 min. Free admission. Daily 8am–8pm.*

4 Hunger Wall (Hladová zeď). From the Rose Garden, walk back toward the funicular train

The rose garden.

station and you'll see this tall, snaggletooth-topped wall running to your left. The wall dates from the mid–14th century and was part of Prague's original medieval defenses—the last thing Prague needed at that time was for Mongol invaders to come pouring in over the hill. The origin of the name "Hunger Wall" is disputed, but the best theory is that the wall was built by the city's poor during a time of famine; workers received food in exchange for their labors. 🕘 *10 min.*

5 ★★ kids Petřín Observation Tower (Petřínská rozhledna). Walk along the Hunger Wall for about 30m (100 ft.) beyond the funicular station, looking for signs to the "Petřínská rozhledna." It's hard to miss this 61m (200-ft.) "Eiffel Tower," which was built in 1891 to resemble the original in Paris. The unbeatable views from the top make the long climb up 299 steps (no lift) worthwhile. On a clear day you can see all the way north to the mountains on the Polish border. 🕘 *30 min. Petřínské sady.* ☎ *257-320-112. 60 Kč (20 Kč for children under 10). May–Sept daily 10am–10pm, Oct–Apr daily 10am–6pm.*

The mini Eiffel Tower on Petřín Hill.

6 ★ kids Maze of Mirrors (Bludiště). Another oddity built for the 1891 exhibition, this "House of Mirrors" is just like one you might see at a carnival. To find it, just walk about 30m (100 ft.) to the right of the Petřín Observation Tower. It's great fun for kids (and highly disorienting for adults!). 🕘 *20 min. 50 Kč (20 Kč for children under 10). May–Aug daily 10am–10pm, Sept–Apr daily 10am–6pm.*

7 ★★ Petřín Gardens (Petřínské sady). From the Maze of Mirrors, walk back toward the Petřín Observation Tower and follow the path to the left of the tower running downhill. About 15m (49 ft.) along the path, turn left onto another path and walk toward Prague Castle. Don't worry if you get a little bit lost; all of the paths lead in the same

Seeing Prague by Balloon

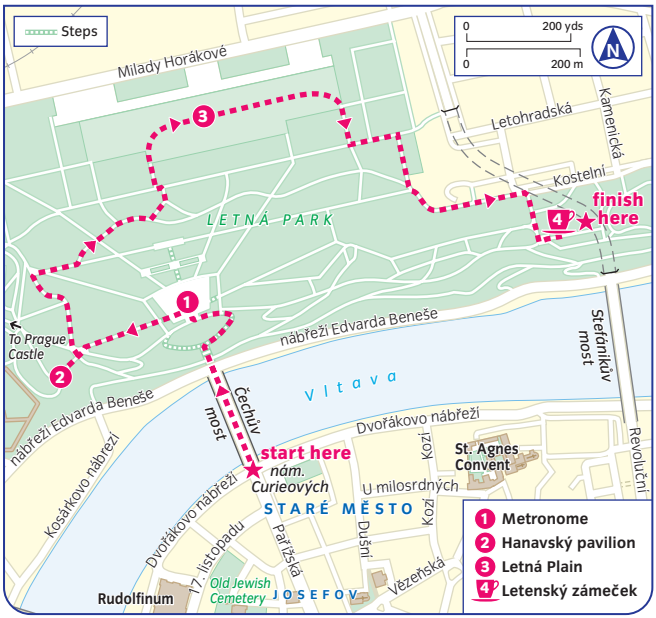
Točná Airport (☎ 241-773-454) offers 1-hour flights over Prague and its surroundings in a balloon—weather permitting! The trip costs 6,300Kč per person. Call ☎ **604-320-044** for a reservation and details.

Also, with **Ballooning CZ,** Na Vrcholu 7, Praha 3 (☎ **222-783-995** or 603-337-005; www.ballooning.cz), you can fly like a bird. An hour in a balloon will cost you 4,700Kč Monday to Friday or 5,200Kč on weekends.

general direction. The first 10 minutes of the walk take you through some quiet woods and the last 15–20 minutes through an apple orchid and across a long meadow, with the castle out in the distance and the town spread out in all its glory below. This is a favorite stroll among city residents. Follow the trail across the meadow until you reach the top of Malá Strana on the other side. From here, you can turn right and walk down to Malostranské náměstí.

Take some time to stroll the quiet lanes of Petřín Gardens.

Lounging in Letná



Whenever I come to Letná, I think of Woody's Allen's movie *Manhattan.* Not the movie so much, but that famous poster of Woody and Diane Keaton sitting on a bench in Brooklyn looking out toward the Manhattan skyline. If they ever came to Prague, this is where they'd sit and look. It's that classic. Letná (Letenské sady) offers something to everyone. Rollerbladers love it for the smooth paths (and you can even rent blades here). Naturally it's a favorite among dog walkers. It's nice, easy jogging terrain, with relatively clean air because of the elevation. It also happens to have the best open-air beer garden in the city. **START: Čechův most (Čechův bridge), which crosses the river from the Intercontinental Hotel in Old Town.**

1 ★ Metronome. Walk across the Čechův most and climb the stairs in either direction up to the top of the hill. In the 1950s, the communist government erected the biggest-ever statue of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin here (see p 42, bullet 8). Since 1991, the space has been given over to a giant metronome, designed by the Czech Republic's official prankster-in-residence David Černý. It's an interesting concept to have a metronome marking time since the Velvet Revolution but arguably a waste of valuable public space. The area feels neglected, and is appreciated mostly by skateboarders, who gather here to test their skills against the monument's tricky steps and railings. *10 min.*

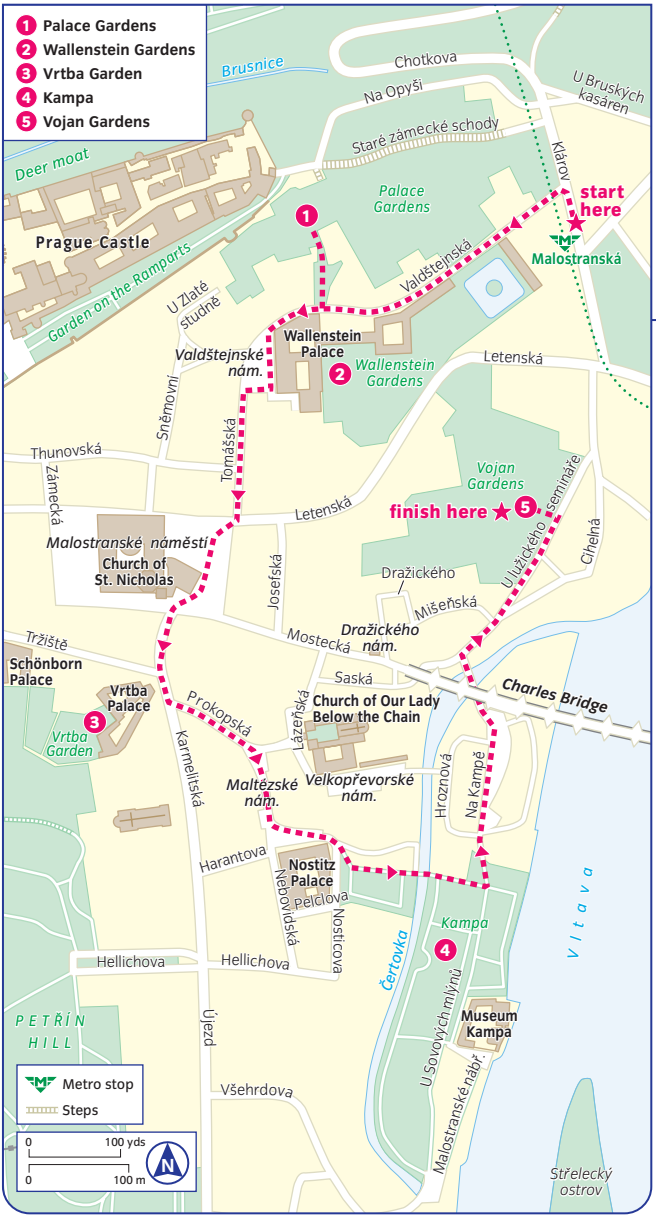
2 Hanavský Pavilon. Facing away from the town below, walk to your left in the general direction of Prague Castle. The path skirting the edge of the hill affords some picture-perfect views over the Vltava River, with Charles Bridge in the background. The Hanavský Pavilon was built for the 1891 Prague Jubilee Exhibition in a neo-Baroque style. Today, it houses a cute cafe and restaurant overlooking the Old Town. *10 min. Letenské sady 173. 233-323-641. Daily 11am–1am.*

3 ★ Letná Plain. What you do from here depends on your time and interests. If you continue walking in the same direction, you'll eventually come to a footbridge that takes you on toward Prague Castle. If you'd like to see more of Letná, walk toward the interior of the park, choosing any of the trails that strike your fancy. Much of Letná is a giant plain, and in the very earliest years of aviation, this area functioned as Prague's makeshift airport. Much later, the open space was used by the communists to hold their massive May Day rallies on May 1. In more recent times, it's been the site of an open-air mass by Pope John Paul II and in 2003 even hosted the Rolling Stones for a massive alfresco concert. On a typical summer day, it's great for tossing a football or a Frisbee. Note that at press time, much of the plain had turned into a massive construction zone as road workers dig out below the park to build a highway tunnel. *20 min.*

4 ★★ Letenský Zámeček. Once you've had your fill of fresh air and sunshine, it's time for liquid refreshment. In the Czech Republic that usually means beer. This complex of restaurants, terraces, and a comfortably down-market beer garden is one of the city's most popular places to meet up after work or on a weekend afternoon. To find it, walk to the extreme eastern end of the park (in the direction away from Prague Castle). The *zámeček* (little castle) houses a decent but expensive restaurant inside and a cheaper pizza-and-barbecue joint on the terrace. Opposite the restaurant and with gorgeous views out over the city are picnic tables where you're free to consume your own food and drinks. Do as the locals do and buy some beers in plastic cups from the little stand out front and relax in the open air. You can also rent balls for lawn bowling (called *pétanque*) and even rollerblades behind the chateau near the public lavatories. *1 hr. Letenské sady 341. 233-378-200. Daily 11am–11pm.*

Letná Plain.

The Gardens of Malá Strana



From street level, Malá Strana looks like an impenetrable collection of walls, cobblestones, bricks, and mortar. Beautiful to be sure, but nary a tree or bush in sight. This is only an illusion. Behind every Baroque palais, towering wall, or imposing gate, there lurks a beautifully manicured garden. Many of the mainly Italian masters who laid out these green oases more than 300 years ago were every bit as famous—and meticulous—in their day as the architects and craftsmen who built the lovely residential palaces. Some of the gardens remain closed to the public, but several have been converted to public parks or gardens. Many bear the names of the aristocratic families that once owned them. But be forewarned that most of the parks are open only from April to October. **START: The Malostranská metro station (Line A).**

1 ★★ Palace Gardens (Palácové Zahrady). Exit the metro station and walk to the left to Valdštejnská ul. At Valdštejnská 12, walk through an iron gate and a small courtyard. This leads you to five beautifully terraced Baroque gardens that front the side of the hill rising up to Prague Castle. One ticket buys entry into all five and you're free to spend as long as you wish walking along the walls and steps from garden to garden. It's confusing keeping track of exactly which garden is which, but you can get a map at the ticket window. The Kolowrat Garden (Kolovratská zahrada) is considered the most valuable from an architectural point of view, with its lookout garden house. The others include the Ledeburg Garden (Ledeburská zahrada), the Small and Big Palffy Gardens (Malá a Velká Pálffyovská zahrada), and the Furstenberg Garden (Furstenberská zahrada). *30 min. Valdštejnská 12. 257-010-401. 79 Kč. Apr–Oct daily 10am–8pm. Metro: Malostranská.*

2 ★★ Wallenstein Gardens (Valdštejnská Zahrada). Continue walking along Valdštejnská ul. until you come to Valdštejnské náměstí (Wallenstein Square). The imposing Baroque Wallenstein

Kolowrat Garden, one of the Palace Gardens.

Palace at no. 4 hides an amazing garden in the back, with an even more amazing limestone drip wall—a grotto—that you have to see to believe. The palais itself was the creation of Albrecht von Wallenstein, a brilliant general during the Thirty Years' War of the 17th century, and was meant to rival Prague Castle in terms of pure shock and awe. Wallenstein's ambitions cost him his life when he was assassinated in 1634 in the western Bohemian town of Cheb (probably on orders of Emperor Ferdinand II). The palais now houses the Czech Senate. The garden follows a formal geometric design and is dotted with ponds and bronze statues. Look closely at the limestone grotto to see animal heads, snakes, and other grotesque figures peeking out. *20 min. Valdštejnské nám. 4. 257-072-759. Free admission. Daily 10am–7pm.*

3 ★★★ Vrtba Garden (Vrtbovská Zahrada). From Valdštejnské náměstí follow Tomášská ul. to Malostranské náměstí, cross the square diagonally, and walk down Karmelitská ul. to the unassuming door at no. 25. Inside lies a meticulously manicured 18th-century terraced garden that truly sets the standard for Baroque gardens. The brilliant statuary, including an eye-catching Atlas as you walk through the door, is the work of Matyáš Bernard Braun. It's a steep hike to the top, but worth it for the views over Malá Strana and the perfect photo op of St. Nicholas Church. *30 min. Karmelitská 25. 257-531-480. 40 Kč. Apr–Oct daily 10am–6pm.*

Vrtba Garden.

4 ★★ Kampa. From the Vrtba Garden walk back a few steps in the direction of Malostranské náměstí, cross the street, and walk down Prokopská ul. Cross Maltézké náměstí and then bear left at the far end of the square onto Nosticová ul. Here you'll find the opening to Kampa Park, the largest expanse of green in Malá Strana. This is my pick for Prague's prettiest park, with gorgeous views over the Vltava on one side and the charming Čertovká stream (with its footbridges and water mills) on the other. The big lawn in the middle is the perfect spot to throw down a blanket and open a book. *30 min.*

5 Vojan Gardens (Vojanovy Sady). If you have time for one more park, walk through Na Kampě (Kampa Square) in the direction of Charles Bridge. Continue straight, going underneath the bridge, and then bear right on U lužického semináře. The Vojan Gardens is a sprawling series of walkways, benches, lawns, and fountains in the middle of the city, well hidden from the masses behind formidable walls. It began life in the 13th century as a fruit garden, and now mostly functions as an urban idyll for office workers looking to escape modern life for half an hour. *20 min. U lužického semináře 17. Free admission. Daily sunrise–sundown.*

6 The Best **Dining**

Dining Best Bets

Best **for Kids**
★★★ Rugantino $ *Dušní 4 (p 107)*

Best **Vegetarian**
★★ Lehká Hlava $ *Boršov 2 (p 105)*

Best **View of the Castle**
★★★ Bellevue $$$$ *Smetanovo nábř. 18 (p 99)*

Best **View of the Bridge**
★★★ Hergetova Cihelna $$$ *Cihelna 2b (p 103)*

Best **Italian Hideaway**
★★★ Aromi $$ *Mánesová 78 (p 98)*

Best **When Only Duck Will Do**
★★ Perpetuum $$ *Na hutích 9 (p 107)*

Best **When for Beer Connoisseurs**
★★ Bredovský dvůr $$ *Politických vězňů 13 (p 100)*

Best **Thai Food**
★★ Arzenal (Siam-I-San) $$$ *Valentínská 11 (p 98)*

Best **Czech-Mex**
★★ Cantina $$ *Újezd 38 (p 101)*

Best **Beer and Burger Joint**
★★ Fraktal $ *Šmeralová 1 (p 102)*

Best **for Celeb Sightings**
★★ Kampa Park $$$$ *Na Kampě 8b (p 103)*

Best **Meal for the Money**
★★★ Mozaika $$ *Nitranská 13 (p 105)*

Best **Czech**
★★★ Černý Kohout $$$ *Vojtěšská 9 (p 102)*

Best **if Price Is No Object**
★★★ Allegro $$$$ *Veleslavínová 2a (p 98)*

Best **Meal at the Opera**
★★★ Zahrada v Opeře $$$ *Legerová 75 (p 108)*

Best **Pork Knuckle**
★★★ Kolkovna $$ *V Kolkovně 8 (p 104)*

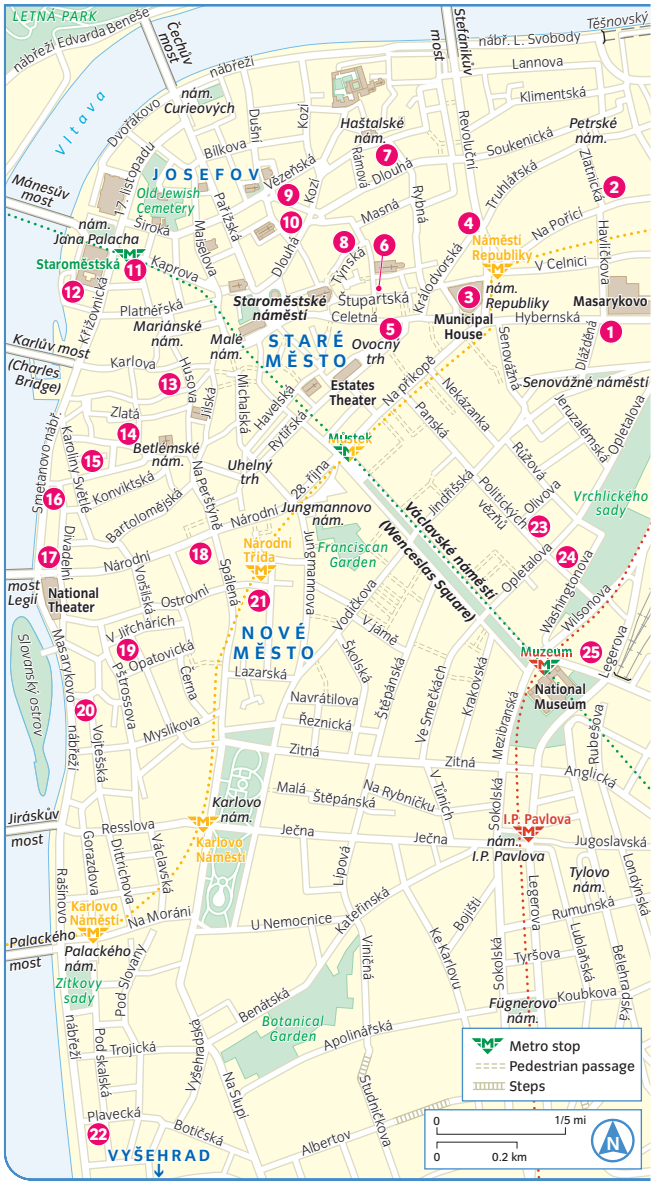
Cowboys.

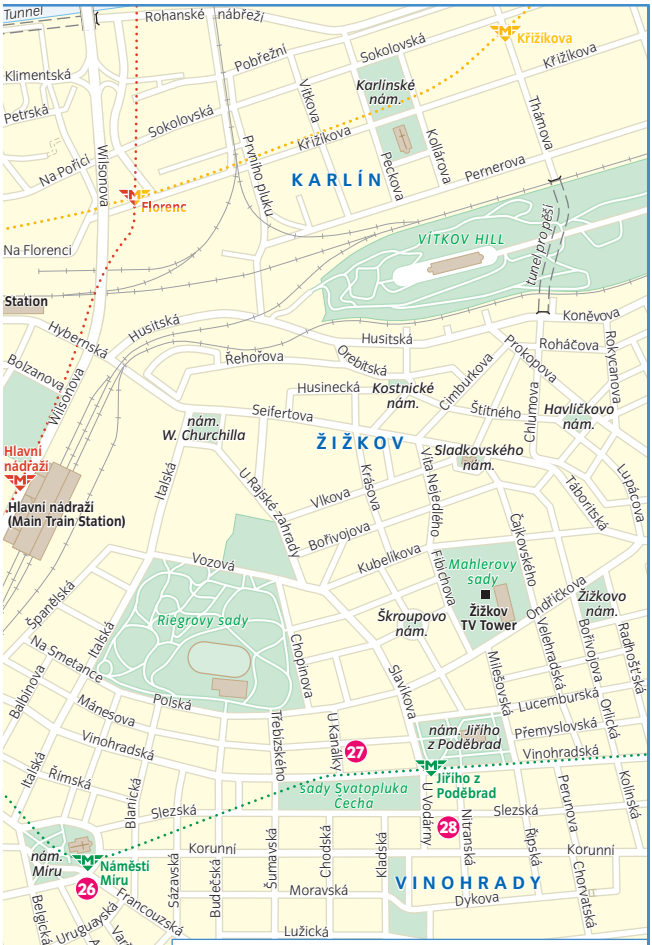
Malá Strana Area

Alchymist 7	**Hergetova Cihelna** 5
Café Savoy 10	**Kampa Park** 6
Cantina 8	**Pálffy Palác** 3
Cowboys 4	**Perpetuum** 2
Fraktal 1	**Sushi Bar** 9

Photo p 93: V Zátiší restaurant.

Staré Město Area





Allegro 12	Café Louvre 18	Lehká Hlava 15
Aromi 27	Café Montmartre 13	Mozaika 28
Arzenal (Siam-I-San) 11	Café Slavia 17	Obecní dům 3
Bea's 8	Černý Kohout 20	Oliva 22
Bellevue 16	Ferdinanda 24	Pizza Nuovo 4
Brasserie M 21	Grand Café Orient 5	Rugantino 10
Bredovský dvůr 23	Grosseto 26	Universal 19
Café Arco 1	Kolkovna 9	V Zátiší 14
Café Imperial 2	La Degustation 7	Zahrada v Opeře 25
	La Provence 6	

Prague Restaurants A to Z

★★★ **Alchymist.** MALÁ STRANA *CONTINENTAL* An excellent choice for a special night out, though not everyone will fall in love with the overwrought interior—candelabras, mirrors, and statues. In summer you can dine in a newly opened exotic garden, with a small beach, daybeds, and a Moroccan-style tent; it's really something special. The veal medallions "al Piccata," with lemon sauce, carrots, and eggplant, are very good. ***Hellichová 4. ☎ 257-312-518. Entrees 400 Kč–600 Kč, 3-course set menu 1,150 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 95.***

★★★ **Allegro.** STARÉ MĚSTO *ITALIAN/CZECH* There aren't many star chefs in Prague, but Allegro's top man in the kitchen, Vito Mollica, is as close as it gets. When the Four Seasons Hotel opened here a few years back, they spared no expense to create Prague's best restaurant for foodies. The menu is eclectic, but leans toward Italian. For starters try the homemade ravioli, stuffed with zucchini and lobster. For mains, you can't go wrong with the light, delicious seared salmon in a chick-pea purée. In summer, dine on the terrace overlooking the Vltava. ***Veleslavínová 2a. ☎ 221-427-000. Entrees 500 Kč–900 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 96.***

★★★ **Aromi.** VINOHRADY *ITALIAN* This upscale Italian restaurant in residential Vinohrady was the toughest table to book in 2007. The secret: food that approaches the quality of Allegro (see above) at around half the price. The fresh fish may even be better than Allegro's. The menu features simple but trendy choices such as pumpkin risotto and aged balsamic vinegar or salt cod with potato cream and raisin pesto. Owner and head chef Riccardo Lucque has put in time at some of the best restaurants in New York and London. ***Mánesová 78. ☎ 222-713-222. Entrees 250 Kč–500 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Jiřího z Poděbrad. Map p 96.***

★★ **Arzenal (Siam-I-San).** STARÉ MĚSTO *THAI* Put this in the "only in Prague" category—a combination

Arzenal (Siam-I-San).

Brasserie M.

upscale Thai restaurant and funky glass shop, featuring the jarring and not-to-everyone's-liking glass designs of Czech artist Borek Šípek. The Thai food is easily the best in Prague. Try the sweet-sharp tofu curry in a sauce of coconut milk, chilies, and sweet basil. The cutlery, glasses, and plates are all for sale. ***Valentínská 11. ☎ 224-814-099. Entrees 240 Kč–400 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 96.***

★ **Bea's.** STARÉ MĚSTO *VEGETARIAN* Vegetarians have it rough in Prague. The practice of eschewing meat has been slow to catch on, and to add insult to injury, even items in the *bez masa* (without meat) section of restaurant menus often contain small bits of ham or bacon (apparently for flavor). This cafeteria-style eatery, just a stone's throw from Old Town Square, serves decent, Indian-inflected, meatless meals such as stewed lentils and curries for possibly the lowest prices in town. Closes early on Sundays. ***Týnská 19. ☎ 777-165-478. Entrees 70 Kč–140 Kč. No credit cards. Lunch & dinner daily (closes at 6pm on Sun). Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 96.***

★★★ **Bellevue.** STARÉ MĚSTO *CONTINENTAL* Until recently, the food here was no match for the dramatic tableside vistas to the castle across the river, but the owners have upped the ante and what's on your plate now vies for at least equal attention. The menu is a bit on the timid side, with items like monkfish and New Zealand lamb, but it's all fresh, and superbly presented. My favorite is the local specialty: Czech pikeperch served in a sauce of Tramín wine. Dress up. ***Smetanovo nábř. 18. ☎ 222-221-443. Entrees 600 Kč–800 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 96.***

★★★ **Brasserie M.** NOVÉ MĚSTO *FRENCH* One of only a handful of Prague restaurants to be accorded Michelin recognition—in this case a "Bib Gourmand," not a star exactly, but something close. The French owner is trying to re-create an authentic Paris bistro in the middle of Prague and has largely succeeded. The menu runs to French classics like coq au vin and beef tournedos seared with foie gras. ***Vladislavová 17. ☎ 224-054-070. Entrees 250 Kč–400 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 96.***

★★ **Bredovský dvůr.** NOVÉ MĚSTO *CZECH* Perhaps only in the Czech Republic does beer deserve such lofty consideration in selecting a restaurant. This Czech tavern serves nonpasteurized Pilsener Urquell from large tanks behind the bar (the equivalent, I suppose, of drinking fine wine right from the barrel). The crowds love it. It's also a great place for the beer's culinary counterpoints—roast pork with bread dumplings and sauerkraut, or roast duck. ***Politických vězňů 13. ☎ 224-215-428. Entrees 150 Kč–250 Kč. No credit cards. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Mustek. Map p 96.***

★ **Café Arco.** NOVÉ MĚSTO *TRADITIONAL CAFE* This was once the cafe of choice for Prague's German-speaking Jewish writers, including Franz Werfel, Max Brod, and, naturally, Franz Kafka. Habitués here were known for a time as "Arconauts." Legend has it this was where Kafka met the love of his life, Milena Jesenská. Alas, it's only a shell of its former self, with a lifeless canteen serving bad food on one side and some nondescript offices on the other. A small window exhibition, including an unconvincing portrait of the young Kafka, is the only clue to what once transpired here. ***Hybernská 16. ☎ 974-863-542. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 96.***

Café Imperial.

★★★ **Café Imperial.** NOVÉ MĚSTO *TRADITIONAL CAFE* This eclectic, Art Nouveau cafe dates from 1912, but was thoroughly renovated in 2007. The signature tiled pillars and mosaics remain intact, but the renovation brought in nicer tables and chairs and a revamped menu of well-prepared Czech and international dishes. A perfect throwback to the era of the silent screen. Also serves an excellent American breakfast, with eggs, sausage, and bacon. ***Na Poříčí 15. ☎ 246-011-440. Entrees 200 Kč–400 Kč. MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 96.***

★★ **Café Louvre.** NOVÉ MĚSTO *TRADITIONAL CAFE* This former intellectual heavyweight was reputedly a favorite hangout of German-speaking students in the early years of the 20th century, including—for a time—a visiting professor named Albert Einstein. Even Kafka dropped by for a debate or two. There's nothing remotely cerebral about the place today; it's just a bright, bustling cafe, serving decent coffee drinks and a full menu of Czech and international dishes. ***Národní 22. ☎ 224-930-949. Entrees 100 Kč–300 Kč. MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 96.***

★ **Café Montmartre.** STARÉ MĚSTO *TRADITIONAL CAFE* Laid-back student cafe on a quiet, hard-to-find street in the Old Town. The coffee's not that great (you'll get better espresso drinks at the Ebel cafe next door), but the interior

Cantina.

retains the feel of a 1920s cabaret (essentially what it used to be). Good choice for a quiet chat over a glass of wine. Limited food options. ***Řetězová 7. ☎ 222-221-244. No credit cards. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 96.***

★★ kids **Café Savoy.** MALÁ STRANA *CZECH* A beautiful setting in a restored 19th-century coffeehouse, with an eclectic menu running from Czech classics like *svičková* (marinated beef tenderloin served in a cream sauce with bread dumplings) to full-on English and American breakfasts. Ideal for lunch or for coffee and cakes between meals. At meal times, reservations are recommended. ***Vítězná 1. ☎ 257-311-562. Entrees 150 Kč–300 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 95.***

★ **Café Slavia.** STARÉ MĚSTO *TRADITIONAL CAFE* This legendary dissident cafe has the added advantage of a perfect view out over the river toward Prague Castle. The Slavia was once a meeting point for Václav Havel and other dissident intellectuals from the theater and film worlds; it was remodeled in the 1990s and never fully recaptured its cachet. Now, it's mostly filled with tourists perched at the window admiring the castle. Both the coffee and the food are hit-and-miss, but it's still a must visit for Havel fans. ***Smetanovo náb. 2. ☎ 224-218-493. Entrees 150 Kč–300 Kč. MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 96.***

★★ **Cantina.** MALÁ STRANA *MEXICAN* Czechs line up out the door for a chance at a chicken or beef burrito or a plate of sizzling fajitas. Mexican food has had a rough ride in Prague—it's considered too spicy for local tastes. Cantina has mellowed it just enough to make it palatable, but not so much as to make it bland. Tequila keeps the atmosphere more than festive, but book in advance or be prepared for a long wait for a table. ***Újezd 38. ☎ 257-317-173. Entrees 120 Kč–250 Kč. No credit cards. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 95.***

Černý Kohout.

★★★ **Černý Kohout.** NOVÉ MĚSTO *CZECH* One of the few places in town that's capable of elevating Czech food to the best of international cuisines. Game is a staple of Czech cooking, and here you can try both wild boar and wild duck in one entree, served on red cabbage with apples. Offers an amazing-value set business lunch for 199 Kč, with simpler Czech dishes like venison served with homemade bacon dumplings. ***Vojtěšská 9. ☎ 251-681-191. Entrees 400 Kč–500 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Karlovo nám. Map p 96.***

★★ **Cowboys.** MALÁ STRANA *STEAKHOUSE* This is a leading destination for steak lovers—with the top draw the highly recommended rib-eye (served with baked potato in a red-wine sauce). Cowboys is run by the same team that owns Kampa Park, but the atmosphere here is festive, not snooty. In nice weather, keep climbing to the top to the open-air terrace, just below Prague castle. Chocolate cheesecake is the perfect way to end the meal. ***Nerudová 40. ☎ 800-157-626. Entrees 300 Kč–600 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 95.***

★ **Ferdinanda.** NOVÉ MĚSTO *CZECH* Popular Czech pub right off of Wenceslas Square, serving decent local fare and beers brought in from the small Ferdinand brewery located in Benešov, about 48km (30 miles) south of Prague. Goulash gets top billing here, served Czech-style, cooked with cumin and sweet paprika and served with fresh grated onions on top. The beers are excellent. Try the sweetish dark beer *(tmavé)*, or a stronger semidark, Sedml kuli. ***Opletalová 24. ☎ 222-244-302. Entrees 100 Kč–160 Kč. MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Muzeum. Map p 96.***

★★ **Fraktal.** LETNÁ *SANDWICHES* Not long ago, this used to be the smokiest beer-swilling dive this side of the river. The owners decided to clean up their act and offer arguably the best burgers and bar-style Mexican food (burritos and quesadillas) in Prague. Try the goat-cheese burger with pistachio nuts. The perfect choice if you're looking for a great bite and want to tie one on later: You won't have to move

from your seat all night. In nice weather, sit on the streetside terrace, but call in advance to reserve. Good brunches on weekends from 11am until 3pm. *Šmeralová 1.* ☎ *777-794-094. Entrees 100 Kč–200 Kč. No credit cards. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Vltavska, plus tram 1 or 25. Map p 95.*

★★★ **Grand Café Orient.** STARÉ MĚSTO *TRADITIONAL CAFE* Beautifully refurbished Flapper-era cafe that lays claim to being the only Cubist cafe in the world. It's delightfully free from the tour-bus crowd and an excellent spot for a quiet coffee and cake or a glass of wine during the day. *Ovocný trh 19 (at the corner of Celetná).* ☎ *224-224-220. Entrees 100 Kč–200 Kč. MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & light dinner daily. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 96.*

★ **Grosseto.** VINOHRADY *ITALIAN* This popular pizzeria at the Náměstí Miru metro stop is a good choice for lunch or a casual dinner. Grosseto's "Moderní"—a white pizza topped with sun-dried tomatoes, rocket (arugula), and pine nuts—won the Prague Post's annual "Best Pizza" award in 2007. The deal breaker is the lovely, secluded garden in the back—one of the nicest spots in leafy Vinohrady to while away the hours. *Francouzská 2.* ☎ *224-252-778. Entrees 100 Kč–240 Kč. No credit cards. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Náměstí Miru. Map p 96.*

★★★ **Hergetova Cihelna.** MALÁ STRANA *CONTINENTAL* This restaurant boasts what just might be Prague's best riverside dining, with a view to the Charles Bridge that even Charles IV would appreciate. The dining concept here is high-end casual: pastas, sandwiches, and burgers, but the menu also has a nice range of salads and grilled meats. The cheeseburger vies for the best in Prague, but I'm partial to the Wiener schnitzel, served here, oddly, with mashed potatoes. The dessert pancakes come topped with blueberries and maple-syrup ice cream. Part of the Kampa Park group's stable of very good restaurants. *Cihelna 2b.* ☎ *296-826-103. Entrees 300 Kč–500 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 95.*

★★ **Kampa Park.** MALÁ STRANA *CONTINENTAL* Year after year, a table here is widely considered the best in town, even if the cooking has slipped a notch and the prices have gone through the roof. The list of

Hergetova Cihelna.

who's dined here reads like the Hollywood Walk of Fame: Johnny Depp, Matt Damon, Bruce Willis, Brad Pitt, Bruce Springsteen, and Bill and Hillary Clinton (to name a few). For something a little different, try the venison with mushrooms, parsnips, and figs, served in a cardamom reduction. ***Na Kampě 8b. ☎ 296-826-102. Entrees 600 Kč–900 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 95.***

★★★ **Kolkovna.** STARÉ MĚSTO *CZECH* This classic Czech pub is part of a chain owned by the Pilsener Urquell brewery, but don't let that deter you. The standards for food and service are high, and it's even worth stopping in for the beer alone. This is a good place to sample a massive pork knee *(koleno)*, served on a wooden board with slices of bread, plus mustard and horseradish. You won't eat again for 2 days. Gets crowded at mealtimes, so book in advance. ***V Kolkovně 8. ☎ 224-819-701. Entrees 140 Kč–280 Kč. MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 96.***

★★★ **La Degustation.** STARÉ MĚSTO *CZECH/CONTINENTAL* A veritable orgy of fine food. Diners are offered a choice of three elaborate, 12-course set menus, featuring either Czech or Continental classics. The meal unfolds over 3 hours, and sommeliers are on hand to suggest the wines to match the dishes. Not cheap, but a one-of-a-kind culinary adventure. Reservations essential. ***Haštalská 18. ☎ 222-311-234. Set menu 2,000 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner Mon–Sat. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 96.***

★★★ **La Provence.** STARÉ MĚSTO *FRENCH* This relaxed French restaurant has long been a mainstay in Prague's fine-dining firmament, and with the arrival of chef Jerome Lorieux in 2006, it's only gotten better. It's actually two restaurants—an informal "brasserie" upstairs and more intimate space below ground. Both menus are similar and feature classic French cooking like beef bourguignon and rabbit Provençal. They do a very good duck here, served in a red-wine and ginger sauce with mustard-flavored mashed potatoes. ***Štupartská 9. ☎ 296-826-155. Entrees 400 Kč–600 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 96.***

Kolkovna.

La Provence.

★★ **Lehká Hlava.** STARÉ MĚSTO *VEGETARIAN* Arguably the best vegetarian restaurant in Prague, and one of the few places that manage to make a virtue of tofu. The eclectic menu borrows from Spanish, Mexican, Middle Eastern, and Asian cooking. Try the veggie tofu stir-fry with fresh ginger or the baked quesadillas with cheddar cheese and jalapeños. The whole place is nonsmoking, and the casual, funky interior makes it a fun place to hang out. ***Boršov 2. ☎ 222-220-665. Entrees 100 Kč–200 Kč. No credit cards. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 96.***

★★★ **Mozaika.** VINOHRADY *CZECH/ECLECTIC* This popular neighborhood place draws an even mix of Czechs, visitors, and expats. The food is excellent, and the muted modern decor perfect for a quiet evening for two or a business meal. The food is essentially Czech, with noticeable French and Asian influences. Excellent and reasonably priced wine list. Try the fish lasagna, stuffed with tuna, salmon, and ricotta cheese. Not on the menu anymore but worth asking for is the seared salmon with wasabi mashed potatoes. ***Nítranská 13. ☎ 224-253-011. Entrees 200 Kč–400 Kč. MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Jiřího z Poděbrad. Map p 96.***

★★★ **Obecní dům.** STARÉ MĚSTO *TRADITIONAL CAFE* It's a pity this incredible place seems frequented only by tourists; I'd consider it a serious contender for the list of world's top 10 most beautiful cafes. The Art Nouveau details, such as the ornamented chandeliers and tiled mosaics, the evening piano

Obcení dům.

A dish at Perpetuum: Confit of duck, smoked bacon, potato and cheese soufflé, and cranberries.

music, and even the beautiful lavatories overwhelm the comparatively humdrum business of serving coffees and cakes. You can sit on the terrace in nice weather, but who would want to when it's this nice inside? Also serves a full range of wines, beer, and mixed drinks. ***Náměstí Republiky 5.***

☎ 222-002-763. Entrees 100 Kč–300 Kč. Breakfast, lunch & light dinner daily. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 96.

★★★ **Oliva.** NOVÉ MĚSTO *FRENCH/ECLECTIC* Similar to Mozaika in that it's a neighborhood place with lofty culinary ambitions that mostly delivers. Here, the emphasis is more on French cooking, but there are some surprises on the menu, like a grilled octopus starter served on potato salad or a delicious Moroccan chicken tagine with tomato couscous. The perfectly seared crème brûlée is a Prague institution among those in the know. ***Plavecká 4. ☎ 222-520-288. Entrees 220 Kč–400 Kč. MC, V. Lunch & dinner Mon–Sat. Metro: Karlovo nám. Map p 96.***

★★ **Pálffy Palác.** MALÁ STRANA *CONTINENTAL* If nothing less than an über-elegant Baroque salon, complete with candles and flowers, will do, then this is your place. In summer, they open a terrace with a jaw-dropping view of the castle. The yellowfin tuna with pumpkin purée entree is highly recommended and something you don't see everyday on Prague menus. ***Valdštejnská 14. ☎ 257-530-522. Entrees 500 Kč–700***

Some Dining Warnings

Some Czech restaurants are notorious for placing seemingly free bowls of nuts or olives on the table or offering platters of appetizers or aperitifs that appear to be compliments of the house. They're not. When the bill comes, you might find that you're paying the equivalent of $5 for a bowl of stale cashews. Always ask before nibbling.

Many places, especially in the evening, tack on an extra 30 Kč or 50 Kč per person as a cover charge, even if they don't offer live entertainment. If this charge is mentioned at all, it will be written discreetly on the menu as *couvert*.

Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 95.

★★ **Perpetuum.** DEJVICE *CZECH* Duck rarely gets the attention it deserves. Even in Prague, where it's a local staple, most restaurants pre-cook their birds and warm them to order, leaving the meat dry and tasteless. Here they do duck right. The specialty is roast duck with cumin, served with bread and potato dumplings as sides. The grilled Barberie duck with purple potato purée and duck reduction is excellent. The setting is refined but casual. Perfect for a quiet dinner. *Na hutích 9. ☎ 233-323-429. Entrees 220 Kč–340 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner Mon–Sat. Metro: Dejvice. Map p 95.*

★★★ kids **Pizza Nuovo.** STARÉ MĚSTO *PIZZA* Vies with Rugantino (see below) for the best pizza in Prague. Not only are the ingredients imported from Italy, but so is the pizza chef (in this case from Naples). Pizza Diavolo—spicy pepperonis and mozzarella—is worth going out of your way for. The only drawback is a complicated ordering system where you're given a form to fill out, which you hand to the waitress. Don't ask me to explain it, I don't get it either. Just ask for the menu and point to what you want. Casual and fun with a large nonsmoking section. *Revoluční 1. ☎ 221-803-308. Entrees 160 Kč–250 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 96.*

★★★ kids **Rugantino.** STARÉ MĚSTO *PIZZA* Easily the most family-friendly restaurant in all of Prague, with highchairs at the ready and staff who seem oblivious to hordes of little tykes scurrying between the tables. It also happens to have the best thin-crust pizza in town, with Italian-imported olive oils and mozzarella. Pizza Calabrese, a spicier version of American-style pepperoni pizza, is a local classic. *Dušní 4. ☎ 222-318-172. Entrees 120 Kč–200 Kč. No credit cards. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 96.*

★★ **Sushi Bar.** MALÁ STRANA *JAPANESE* Sushi restaurants in Prague tend to be sterile and a little lifeless. This Czech-run place is tiny, intimate, and always hopping. Prices have climbed in recent years, but the fish is the freshest in Prague. Standard sushi and maki sets. The eight-piece "Dragon Roll" is made from grilled eel, avocado, and sesame. *Zborovská 49. ☎ 603-244-882. Entrees 400 Kč–600 Kč. No credit cards. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Malostranská plus tram 22, 12. Map p 95.*

★ **Universal.** NOVÉ MĚSTO *FRENCH/CZECH* A Czech pub that fancies itself a French bistro,

Sushi Bar.

V Zátiši.

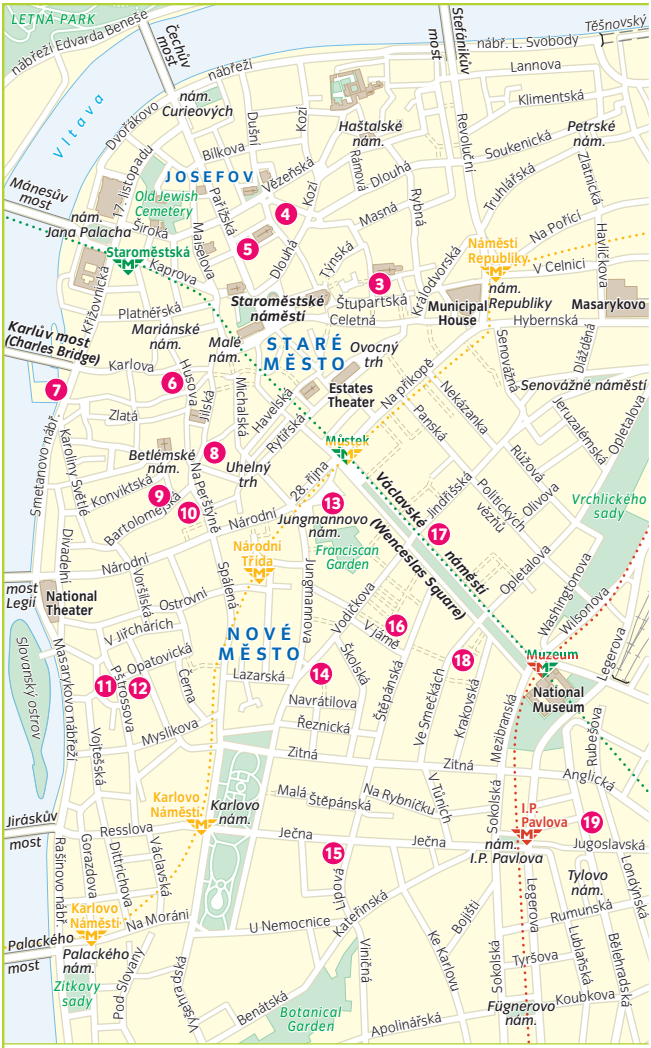
with excellent salads and comfort food at affordable prices. The big-bowl salads include a very good Caesar. For a main course, try the lamb cutlets, priced at about half what you'd pay elsewhere. It's very popular, so call in advance and be prepared to wait in the bar (even if you've reserved). ***V Jirchářích 6. ☎ 224-918-182. Entrees 120 Kč–280 Kč. No credit cards. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 96.***

★★ V Zátiší. STARÉ MĚSTO *CONTINENTAL* The "Still Life" restaurant is the jewel in local restaurateur Sanjiv Suri's crown of high-end restaurants (which also includes Bellevue, above). The quiet location, just off Betlémské náměstí, makes it a favorite for intimate dinners or important business engagements. Like Suri's other restaurants, the menu holds few surprises (standards such as grilled salmon, pork tenderloin, and roast lamb), but the quality of the ingredients and presentation is flawless. My favorite: the roast lamb shank, with hazelnut flavored potato purée. ***Liliová 1. ☎ 222-221-155. Entrees 400 Kč–700 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 96.***

★★★ Zahrada v Opeře. VINOHRADY *CONTINENTAL* Pity that the "Garden at the Opera" is so close to Radio Free Europe. Security concerns mean you have to skirt a concrete bunker and cross a busy road to find the entrance. But rest assured, this is one of the best meals in Prague for the money. The menu is eclectic. Chicken and pork dishes mix it up with more exotic fare like Nasi Goreng (spicy fried rice with shrimps, calamari, and chicken). The atmosphere is dressy-casual, and the opera location makes it a convenient spot for a pre- or post-performance bite. ***Legerová 75. ☎ 224-239-685. Entrees 280 Kč–500 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily. Metro: Muzeum. Map p 96.***

7 The Best **Nightlife**

Staré Město Area



Bugsy's 5	**Hapu 24**	**RadostFX 19**
Chateau Rouge 3	**Jáma 16**	**Solidní Nejistota 11**
Darling Cabaret 18	**K5 Relax Club 21**	**Studio 54 2**
Duplex 17	**Karlovy Lázně 7**	**The Saints 23**
Friends 9	**Pivovarský Dům 15**	**Tretter's 4**

Previous page: Karlovy Lázně dance club.

U Fleků 12
U Medvídků 10
U Pinkasů 13
U Sudu 14
U Vejvodů 8
U Vystřeleného oka 1
U Zlatého tygra 6
Valentino 22
Žlutá Pumpa 20

Metro stop
Pedestrian passage
Steps

Malá Strana Area

HOLEŠOVICE
JOSEFOV
STARÉ MĚSTO
NOVÉ MĚSTO
LETNÁ PARK
Vltava
Letenské nám.
Veletržní
Milady Horákové
Jirečkova
Ovenecká
Dobrovského
Letohradská
Kamenická
Horákové
Heřmanova
Veverkova
Dukelských hrdinů
Kostelní
National Technical Museum
Letenský Tunnel
nábřeží Kpt. Jaroše
ostrov Štvanice
Štefánikův most
nábřeží Edvarda Beneše
Čechův most
nábřeží
nábř. L. Svobody
Těšnovský Tunnel
Lannova
Klimentská
Revoluční
Soukenická
Petrské nám.
Zlatnická
Truhlářská
Haštalské nám.
Dušní
Kozí
Dlouhá
Masná
Rybná
Vězeňská
Dvořákovo nábř.
Mánesův most
17. listopadu
Old Jewish Cemetery
Široká
Maiselova
Pařížská
nám. Jana Palacha
Staroměstská
Kaprova
Náměstí Republiky
Na Poříčí
V Celnici
Havlíčkova
nám. Republiky
Masarykovo Station
Hybernská
Celetná
Staroměstské náměstí
Ovocný trh
Senovážná
Senovážné náměstí
Na příkopě
Nekázanka
Panská
Jindřišská
Politických vězňů
Opletalova
Hlavní nádraží
Vrchlického sady
Růžová
Wilsonova
Washingtonova
Legerova
Vinohradská
Římská
Mezibranská
Krakovská
Ve Smečkách
Štěpánská
Školská
Vodičkova
Jungmannova
Jungmannovo nám.
Václavské náměstí (Wenceslas Square)
Franciscan Garden
Národní Třída
Spálená
Ostrovní
Národní
Na Perštýně
Ovocný trh
Uhelný trh
Betlémské nám.
Karolíny Světlé
Bartolomějská
Dlouhá
Havelská
Michalská
Jilská
Husova
Malé nám.
Mariánské nám.
Platnéřská
Křižovnická
Karlova
most
Bridge)
Smetanovo nábř.
Divadelní
Masarykovo nábřeží
Slovanský ostrov
Vojtěšská
Pštrossova
Myslíkova
Opatovická
Černá
Lazarská
Navrátilova
Řeznická
Žitná
Resslova
Dittrichova
Václavská
Karlovo Náměstí
Karlovo nám.
Na Moráni
Na Zátorce
U Vorlíků
Milady Horákové
Korunovační
Čechova
Šmeralova
Na příkopě
Metro stop
Pedestrian passageway
Steps
0 1/5 mi
0 0.2 km
N
Bar Bar 3
Fraktal 4
Mecca 6
Misch Masch 5
St. Nicholas Café 2
U Černého vola 1

Nightlife Best Bets

Best **Martini**
★★★ Hapu, *Orlická 8 (p 117)*

Best **15th-Century Beer**
★ U Fleků, *Křemencová 11 (p 115)*

Best **Modern Beer**
★★★ Pivovarský Dům, *Lípová 15 (p 116)*

Best **Czech Hospoda**
★★★ U Zlatého tygra, *Husová 17 (p 116)*

Best **Wine Bar**
★★★ U Sudu, *Vodičková 10 (p 118)*

Best for **Celeb Spotting**
★★ Tretter's, *V kolkovně 3 (p 118)*

Best **Dance Club**
★★★ Mecca, *U pruhonu 3 (p 119)*

Best for **Vegetarians**
★★ RadostFX, *B lehradská 120 (p 119)*

Best for **Stag Parties**
★ Darling Cabaret, *Vc Smeckach 32 (p 120)*

Best **Microbrewery**
★★★ Pivovarský Dům, *Lípová 15 (p 116)*

Best for **Those Over 30**
★★ Bugsy's, *Pařížská 10 (p 116)*

Best for **Those Under 20**
★ Karlovy Lázně, *Smetanovo náb. 198 (p 118)*

Best **if You Are Mick Jagger**
★★ Duplex, *Václavské nám. 21 (p 118)*

Best **at 5am**
★★ Studio 54, *Hybernská 38 (p 119)*

Best **Gay Bar**
★★★ The Saints, *Polská 32 (p 120)*

Best **Steam Bath**
★★ K5 Relax Club, *Korunní 5 (p 120)*

Karlovy Lázně.

Prague Nightlife A to Z

Traditional Czech Pubs (Hospody)

★★★ **U Černého vola** HRADČANY One of the few remaining traditional pubs in the immediate area of Prague castle. This a gem. Big wooden tables, unfazed regulars who've seen and done it all, and excellent and increasingly hard-to-find Kozel beer on tap. Worth going out of your way for. ***Loretánské nám. 1. ☎ 220-513-481. Metro: Hradčanská. Map p 112.***

★ **U Fleků** NOVÉ MĚSTO This 15th-century brewpub falls somewhere between "tourist trap" and "must visit." It's certainly no stranger to the many tour buses that stop here nightly at the front door, and the waiters have been known to pad the bill of unsuspecting visitors. On the other hand, U Fleků might well be the most famous watering hole in the city. Its strong house lager is made from a recipe that's more than 500 years old. And the Czech food is decent and not too expensive (given the clientele). Still, you're unlikely to see a Czech in the room (besides the waiter). ***Křemencová 11. ☎ 224-934-019. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 110.***

★★ **U Medvídků** STARÉ MĚSTO Most pubs in Prague serve either Pilsener Urquell or Staropramen beers (both great beers, but sometimes you need a little variety). The "Little Bear" is one of a seemingly dwindling number of places in the city that serves original Budweiser, Budvar, from the southern Bohemian city of České Budějovice. Like U Fleků, this place is a storied, centuries-old pub that's become immensely popular with visitors. Try to time your arrival to avoid mealtimes or call in advance to reserve a seat. ***Na Perštýně 7. ☎ 224-211-916. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 110.***

U Medvídků.

★★ **U Pinkasů** NOVÉ MĚSTO A standard in nearly every guidebook on Prague, but still worth recommending for the excellent Pilsener Urquell beer, passable Czech food, and wonderfully old-fashioned pub feel. In cold weather, settle back at your table and just let the waiters bring round after round. In summer, tables in the back become an impromptu inner-city beer garden. *Jungmannovo nám. 16. ☎ 221-111-150. Metro: Mustek. Map p 110.*

★★★ **Pivovarský Dům** NOVÉ MĚSTO A relative rarity in this beer-soaked town: a microbrewery. Purists will likely turn their noses up at oddities like sour-cherry beer and banana beer, but the fact remains that this is one of the most popular pubs in town. They must be doing something right. Also serves a full menu of very good Czech classics, like the ever-present *vepřo-knedlo-zelo* (roast pork, dumplings, and sauerkraut). Reservations highly recommended. *Lípová 15. ☎ 296-216-666. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 110.*

★ **U Vejvodů** STARÉ MĚSTO Back in the early '90s, this was a classic Czech pub: smoky, dirty, and filled with drunken old codgers, yet it always had great beer and tons of atmosphere. Now it's been remodeled into one of the slickest, biggest, and busiest taverns in the center of town, serving beer by the keg-load to hundreds and hundreds of customers—mostly tourists—each night. On the plus side, the beer (Pilsener Urquell) is still pretty good and the place is so big you'll never be turned away for a lack of seats. *Jilská 4. ☎ 224-219-999. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 110.*

★★ **U Vystřeleného oka** ŽIŽKOV The "Shot-Out Eye" is a legendary Žižkov pub that's contributed immensely to this working-class neighborhood's "bad-boy" image. Not particularly tourist-friendly, but certainly the real deal if it's a Czech pub you're after. The name refers to 15th-century Hussite general Jan Žižka, who, although blind, rarely lost a battle. The district of Žižkov is also named for him. Nice beer garden in summer. Serves excellent Radegast and Kozel beers. *U Božích bojovníků 3. ☎ 222-540-465. Metro: Hlavní nádraží (plus tram 5, 9, or 26). Map p 110.*

Almond cigar cocktail at Bugsy's.

★★★ **U Zlatého tygra** STARÉ MĚSTO The "Golden Tiger" is one of the very few true-blue Czech pubs in the center that hasn't sold its soul to the tourist trade. The regulars still line up for the 3pm opening, much as they always have. The Pilsener Urquell served here is reputed to be some of the best in the city. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton once raised a glass here with Václav Havel and fabled Czech writer Bohumil Hrabal. The photo of that strange night is still on the wall. *Husová 17. ☎ 222-221-111. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 110.*

Bars

★★ **Bar Bar** MALÁ STRANA This cozy, student-oriented bar and small restaurant is convenient to Kampa park. In addition to the usual beer and wine offerings, they make a great mulled wine in winter and have a full menu of sweet and savory crepes. The back room is a nice place to while away a rainy afternoon. ***Všehrdová 17. ☎ 257-312-246. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 112.***

★★ **Bugsy's** STARÉ MĚSTO This calm and cool cocktail and cigar bar lies just off of fashionable Pařížská. A perfectly refined spot to get the evening rolling or to say goodnight over a nightcap. The bartenders know their drinks, and will gladly make one to order if you want something that's not on the menu. ***Pařížská 10. ☎ 224-810-287. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 110.***

★ **Chateau Rouge** STARÉ MĚSTO Whatever international reputation Prague has as a party town owes a lot to this raucous bar not far from Old Town Square. The two big ground-floor bars—and several rooms downstairs—fill up fast in the evening, and the festivities usually last well into the night. Highly popular with revelers from around the world. ***Jakubská 2. ☎ 222-316-328. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 110.***

★★ **Fraktal** LETNÁ Not long ago this was a scruffy basement joint reserved exclusively for hard-core partiers. The owners cleaned up their act and took Fraktal slightly more up-market. The result is the friendliest and most enjoyable pub in this part of town. Decent Mexican food and an English-speaking staff round out the charms. ***Šmeralová 1. ☎ 777-794-094. Metro: Hradčanská (plus tram 1, 8, 25, or 26). Map p 112.***

★★★ **Hapu** ŽIŽKOV This modest neighborhood speak-easy–type place is perfect for people who enjoy well-made cocktails, but don't like the pretension that's sometimes associated with "cocktail bars." Comfortably down-market surroundings, such as amiably frayed rugs and thrift-store couches, contribute to the relaxed vibe. The drinks are the best in town. ***Orlická 8. ☎ 222-720-158. Metro: Flora. Map p 110.***

★★ **Jáma** NOVÉ MESTO This fun, college-town-bar type of place draws an eclectic crowd of Czechs, expats,

St. Nicholas Cafe.

and tourists from all walks of life. The "Cheers"-type bar—with English-speaking bartenders (usually female)—is great for solo travelers. After a few drinks, you'll have a roomful of new friends. ***V jámě 7. ☎ 224-222-383. Metro: Mustek. Map p 110.***

★ **St. Nicholas Cafe** MALÁ STRANA The inviting downstairs drinking room at this cafe is perfect for a quiet conversation, with low light, funky tables and chairs, and a relaxed vibe. The bar stocks the usual selection of beer and wine, and some mixed drinks. Resist the temptation to order the sub-par pizza. Instead, make this a pre- or post-dinner stop. ***Tržiště 10. No phone. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 112.***

★★ **Tretter's** STARÉ MĚSTO This elegant Old Town cocktail bar attracts the glamour set as well as a fair number of Hollywood celebrities in town for a movie shoot. Arrive before 9pm to snag a coveted table along the wall opposite the bar. Dress up after 11pm in order to get past the doorman out front. Good gimlets. ***V kolkovně 3. ☎ 224-811-165. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 110.***

U Sudu.

★★★ **U Sudu** NOVÉ MĚSTO You'll find this labyrinthine wine bar just a short walk from Václavské náměstí. People come here not for the fine wines—the drink card contains mostly ordinary Czech whites and reds—but for the all-important social and party aspect of drinking. If at first you don't find a seat, keep on walking down and down. In the fall, look out for *burčák,* a cloudy young wine with a sour-sweet taste and deceptively high potency. ***Vodičková 10. ☎ 222-232-207. Metro: Mustek. Map p 110.***

★★ **Žlutá Pumpa** VINOHRADY Students flock to this informal watering hole in Vinohrady. Impossibly crowded after midnight, so come early or content yourself with standing at the bar. They serve passably good Mexican food, but truth be told, most people are here for the beer and the party vibe. ***Belgická 12. ☎ 608-184-360. Metro: Náměstí Miru. Map p 110.***

Dance Clubs

★★ **Duplex** NOVÉ MĚSTO The main advantage of this crowded rooftop dance club is location—right in the middle of Václavské náměstí. A bit more sophisticated than Karlovy Lázně (see below), with a slightly older, more established clientele. Mick Jagger thought so much of the place that he picked Duplex for his 60th birthday party a few years ago (though most of the customers are well south of 60). ***Václavské nám. 21. ☎ 732-221-111. Cover 150 Kč. Metro: Mustek. Map p 110.***

★ **Karlovy Lázně** STARÉ MĚSTO Karlovy Lázně advertises itself as Central Europe's biggest dance club, and that may well be true. Each of the several floors of dancing has a different sound and theme: techno,

metal, pop, oldies, funk, depending on the night. Popular with students and 20-somethings, who line up at the door at midnight and stay until dawn. ***Smetanovo náb. 198. ☎ 222-220-502. Cover 100 Kč–200 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 110.***

★★★ **Mecca** HOLEŠOVICE This cool, designer disco tends to draw a successful, trendier-than-thou crowd in their 20s to 40s. Great DJs. Wear your best clubbing duds and take a map—you'll need it to find this place, in a still-scruffy part of Holešovice. Free admission on Wednesdays. ***U průhonu 3. ☎ 283-870-522. Cover 100 Kč–200 Kč. Metro: Nádraží Holešovice. Map p 112.***

★★ **Misch Masch** LETNÁ The latest incarnation of a famed club from the 1990s of the same name—a wide-open, no-holds-barred dance club that gets going only after midnight. Separate rooms for funk and oldies. Most revelers are in their student years and 20s, but you'll see all ages here. ***Veletržní 61. ☎ 603-222-227. Cover 100 Kč–200 Kč. Metro: Vltavská (plus tram 1 or 25). Map p 112.***

★★ **RadostFX** NOVÉ MĚSTO This sophisticated music club, vegetarian restaurant, and cafe broke new ground when it first opened in the early 1990s and is still going strong. Every few years the interior gets a makeover and it looks as fresh as the day it opened. Draws a well-heeled crowd in their 20s and 30s, mixed straight and gay. ***Bělehradská 120. ☎ 603-181-500. Cover 100 Kč–200 Kč. Metro: I.P. Pavlova. Map p 110.***

★ **Solidní Nejistota** NOVÉ MĚSTO A bar/restaurant combo that after 8pm or so transforms itself into a classic disco meat market. Get there early to get a table.

Solidní Nejistota.

The place to go on those nights when nothing less than Abba, the soundtrack from *Grease,* and Gloria Gaynor's classic "I Will Survive" will do. Inexplicably popular from the day it opened. ***Pštrossová 21. Cover 150 Kč. ☎ 605-000-500. Metro: I.P. Pavlova. Map p 110.***

★★ **Studio 54** NOVÉ MĚSTO One of the few genuine after-party clubs in Prague. It's kind of down at heel, and in a dicey part of town not far from Masarykovo nádraží; nevertheless, it's the center of the action after everything else closes down. The club opens around 5am on Saturday and Sunday mornings and you can dance into the afternoon. The music is loud, thumping techno that's guaranteed to keep you awake no matter how many you've had. ***Hybernská 38. No phone. Cover 150 Kč. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 110.***

Gay & Lesbian Bars & Clubs

★★ **Friends** STARÉ MĚSTO A centrally located bar and club that's popular with both locals and tourists. Runs a weekly lesbian night on Fridays. ***Bartolomějská 11.***

☎ *224-236-772. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 110.*

★★★ **The Saints** VINOHRADY
This welcoming, British-owned pub hosts regular theme parties and pub quiz nights in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. Thursday night is ladies' night. The website has a good overview of other bars and Prague's gay scene. *Polská 32.* ☎ *222-250-326. www.praguesaints.cz. Metro: Jiřího z Poděbrad. Map p 110.*

★★ **Valentino** VINOHRADY
Prague's biggest gay dance club functions more or less as the unofficial ground zero of the city's gay life. Operates on three floors, with two full-sized dance floors. Can get crowded on Fridays and Saturdays after midnight. The owners also run the adjacent Celebrity cafe. *Vinohradská 40.* ☎ *222-513-491. Metro: Muzeum. Map p 110.*

Cabarets & Adult Entertainment

★ **Darling Cabaret** NOVÉ MĚSTO
Probably the biggest and best-known of Prague's many "cabarets"—in this instance, a polite word for strip club. It advertises more than 150 girls nightly, with all kinds of dances and entertainment. Highly popular with the many British guys who come to Prague for a relatively cheap bachelor-party stag. *Ve Smečkach 32.* ☎ *777-099-997. Metro: Muzeum. Map p 110.*

★★ **K5 Relax Club** VINOHRADY
This high-end gentlemen's club caters to a mostly corporate clientele. It occupies three floors of a Vinohrady townhouse, with a restaurant, a cocktail bar, and a large area for sauna, massage, and steam baths. Also offers an escort service. *Korunní 5.* ☎ *224-250-505. Metro: Náměstí Miru. Map p 110.*

Friends.

8 The Best **Arts & Entertainment**

Arts & Entertainment Best Bets

Best **Opera House**
★★★ Státní Opera, *Wilsonová 4 (p 128)*

Best Place **to Hear Classical Music**
★★★ Rudolfinum, *Náměstí Jana Palacha (p 128)*

Best Place **to See Classical Music**
★★★ Obecní dům's Smetana Hall, *Náměstí Republiky 5 (p 127)*

Best **Theater**
★★★ Švandovo Divadlo na Smíchově, *Stefaníková 57 (p 126)*

Best for **Don Giovanni**
★★ Stavovské Divadlo, *Ovocní trh 1 (p 126)*

Best for **"Donnie" Giovanni**
★★★ Národní Divadlo Marionet (National Puppet Theater), *Žatecká 1 (p 126)*

Best **Black Light Theater**
★★★ Divadlo Image, *Pařížská 4 (p 126)*

Best **Jazz Club**
★★★ AghaRTA, *Železná 16 (p 129)*

Best **Club for 20-Somethings**
★★ Roxy, *Dlouhá 33 (p 131)*

Best **Club for 30-Somethings**
★★ Palac Akropolis, *Kubelikova 27 (p 131)*

Best Place **to See a Ballet**
★★★ Národní Divadlo, *Národí třída 2 (p 126)*

Best for **Experimental Theater**
★★★ Švandovo Divadlo na Smichově, *Stefaníková 57, (p 126)*

Best **Organ Concerts**
★★★ St. James Basilica (Bazilika sv. Jakuba), *Malá Stupartská 6 (p 128)*

A performance of Candide at the Státní Opera.

Malá Strana Area

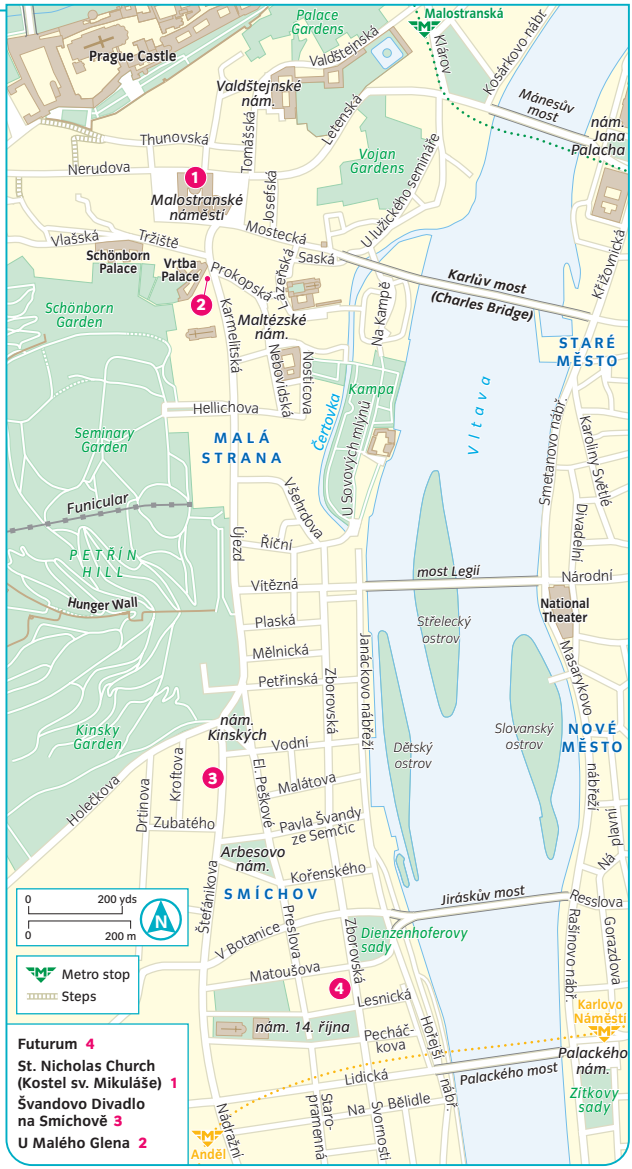
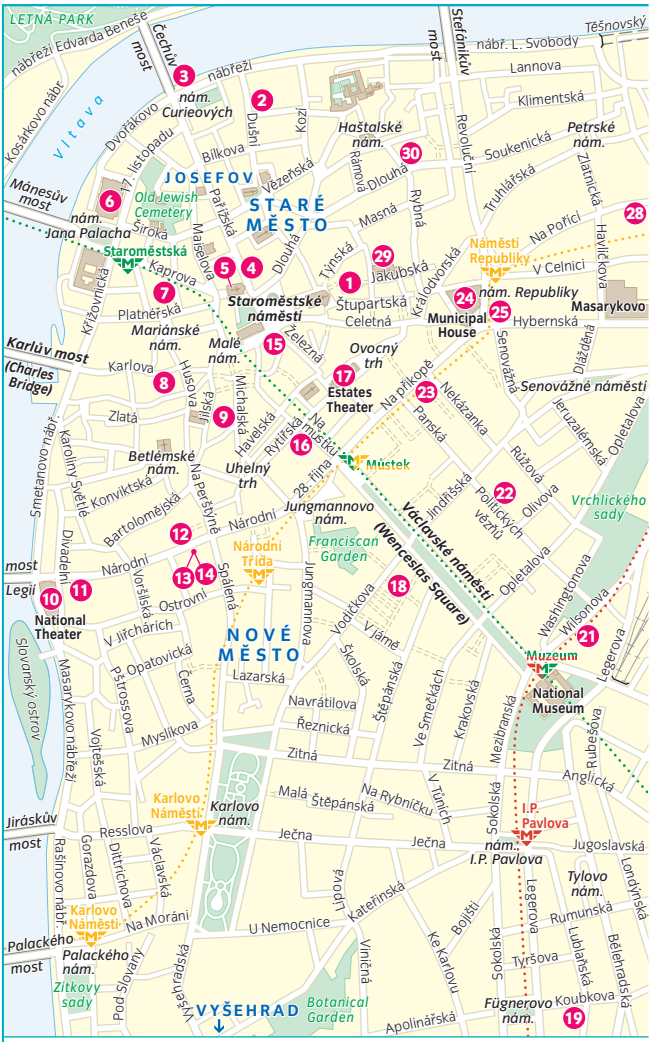
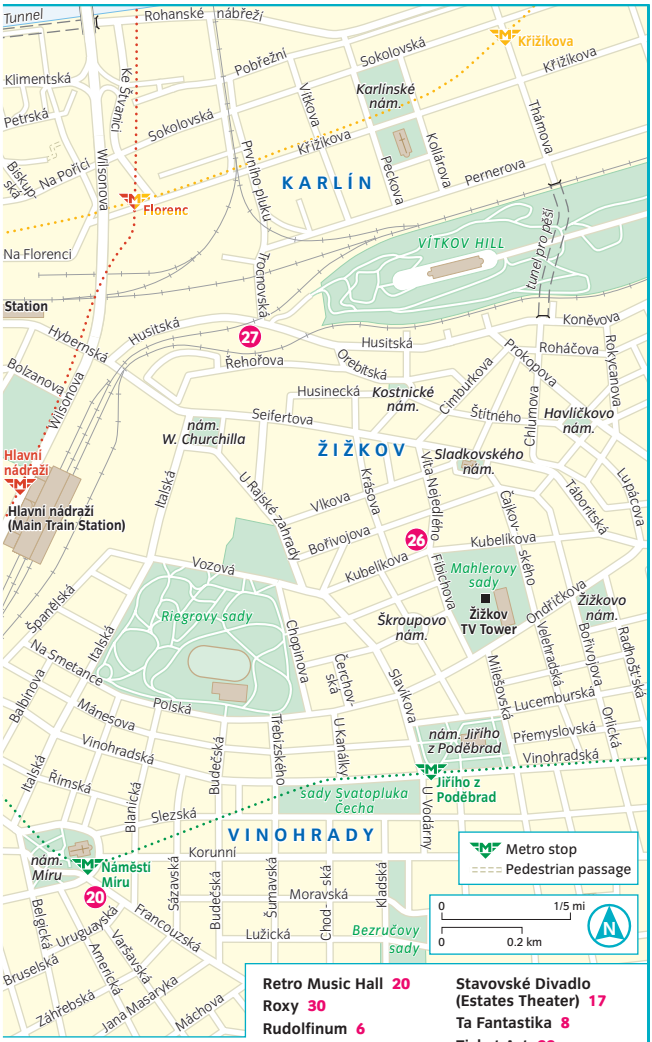


Photo p 121: Prague Symphony Orchestra performing at Obcení dům's Smetana Hall.

Staré Mešto Area



AghaRTA 15
Archa 28
Bohemia Ticket International 23
Church of Saints Simon and Jude (Kostel sv. Šimona a Judy) 2
Divadlo Image 4
Hybernia 25
Jazz Boat 3
Jiří Srnec Black Light Theatre 13
Laterna Magika 11
Lucerna Music Bar 18
Národní Divadlo Marionet (National Puppet Theater) 7
Národní Divadlo (National Theater) 10



Obecní dům (Municipal House) 24
Palac Akropolis 26
Ponec 27
Reduta 14
Retro Music Hall 20
Roxy 30
Rudolfinum 6
St. James Basilica (Bazilika sv. Jakuba) 29
St. Nicholas Church (Chrám sv. Mikuláše) 5
Státní Opera (State Opera) 21
Stavovské Divadlo (Estates Theater) 17
Ta Fantastika 8
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TicketPro 16
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Ungelt 1
U Staré Paní 9
Vagon 12

Prague A&E A to Z

Theater

★ **Hybernia** NOVÉ MĚSTO This glitzy, tourist-friendly theater focuses on big-budget musicals and theater spectacles. In 2007, the theater put on a musical version of *The Golem,* available in seven languages, including Hebrew. ***Náměstí Republiky 4. ☎ 221-419-419. www.divadlo-hybernia.cz. Tickets 200 Kč–800 Kč. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 124.***

★★★ **Národní Divadlo (National Theater)** NOVÉ MĚSTO For more than a century, the leading stage in the Czech Republic has offered an alternating program of high-end theater, ballet, and opera. For non-Czech speakers, the ballet and opera performances will be of most interest (many of the operas are supertitled in English and German). The program has become more innovative in recent years, breaking away from bread-and-butter Czech classics in favor of more international offerings. Dress up.

Foyer of the National Theater.

Národní třída 2. www.narodni-divadlo.cz. ☎ 224-901-668. Tickets 100 Kč–1,000 Kč. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 124.

★★ **Stavovské Divadlo (Estates Theater)** STARÉ MĚSTO An offshoot of the National Theater with a similar repertoire. The theater's main claim to fame is that it hosted the premier of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in 1787—with none other than Wolfgang himself in the conductor's role. In summer, a private company offers nightly performances of the opera for tourists. In season, a more demanding, experimental version of Don Giovanni is performed here as part of the National Theater. ***Ovocní trh 1. ☎ 224-228-503. www.narodni-divadlo.cz. Tickets 30 Kč–1,000 Kč. Metro: Mustek. Map p 124.***

★★★ **Švandovo Divadlo na Smíchově** SMÍCHOV Experimental space offering an eclectic and often high-quality program of theater, dance, and live music. The repertoire leans toward modern and alternative works, with a commitment to international artists. Many of the theater performances are subtitled in English. ***Stefaníková 57. ☎ 257-318-666. www.svandovodivadlo.cz. Tickets 140 Kč–400 Kč. Metro: Anděl. Map p 123.***

Puppet & Black Light Theater

★★★ **Divadlo Image** STARÉ MĚSTO Highly popular black light theater in Old Town. The nearly nightly production, "Black Box," mixes traditional black light techniques with high-tech imagery, dance, and music. Entertaining. ***Pařížská 4. ☎ 222-314-458. www.imagetheatre.cz. Tickets 480 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.***

Národní Divadlo Marionet.

★★ **Jiří Srnec Black Light Theatre** NOVÉ MĚSTO Well-respected black light theater from one of the innovators of the concept back in the 1960s. In summer, they offer daily performances of "The Best of Black Light Theater," essentially a montage of great scenes from the past 40 years. ***Národní třída 20. ☎ 721-589-244. www.blacktheatresrnec.cz. Tickets 520 Kč. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 124.***

★★ **Laterna Magika** NOVÉ MĚSTO The original Black Light theater troupe that traces its roots back to the 1958 Brussels World Expo, where this peculiarly Czech form of drama first hit the international stage. ***Národní 4. ☎ 224-931-482. Tickets 540 Kč–680 Kč. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 123.***

★★★ kids **Národní Divadlo Marionet (National Puppet Theater)** STARÉ MĚSTO Puppets are big in Prague, and this theater in Old Town is the big time in puppet land. Offers a daily performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* that's great for kids and in many ways more entertaining than the serious productions at the Stavovské Divadlo (see above). ***Žatecká 1. ☎ 224-819-322. www.mozart.cz. Tickets 490 Kč–590 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.***

★★ **Ta Fantastika** STARÉ MĚSTO Another highly regarded black light theater. This one's marquee feature is "Aspects of Alice," an adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice and Wonderland* and highly suitable for kids. ***Karlová 8. ☎ 222-221-366. www.tafantastika.cz. Tickets 200 Kč–600 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.***

Opera, Dance & Classical

★★★ **Obecní dům (Municipal House)** STARÉ MĚSTO Home to one of the leading orchestras, the Prague Symphony Orchestra (abbreviated "fok"), and housing probably the country's most beautiful room for listening to classical music, the Bedřich Smetana Hall. In summer, the Obecní dům is also rented out by private musicians, who hold concerts of varying quality aimed at tourists. ***Náměstí Republiky 5.***

St. Nicholas Church.

☎ 222-002-121. www.obecni-dum.cz. Tickets 200 Kč–1,100 Kč. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 124.

★★ **Ponec** ŽIŽKOV A beacon of civility in an otherwise dreary part of town, Ponec is Prague's center for contemporary dance and movement theater. Home to the annual Tanec Praha dance festival. *Husitská 24. ☎ 222-721-531. www.divadlo ponec.cz. Tickets 200 Kč–300 Kč. Metro: Florenc. Map p 124.*

★★★ **Rudolfinum** STARÉ MĚSTO This beautiful neo-Renaissance concert hall hosts the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and arguably boasts the best sound quality of any classical venue in the country. Attracts some big-name musicians. Most concerts take place in the main Dvořák hall. The smaller Suk hall toward the back is used for chamber concerts. Another chance to dress up. *Náměstí Jana Palacha. ☎ 227-059-227. www.czechphil harmonic.cz. Tickets 200 Kč–1,000 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.*

★★★ **Státní Opera (State Opera)** NOVÉ MĚSTO The leading opera house in Prague, offering a highly polished repertoire of classics like *Carmen, Rigoletto, Madame Butterfly,* and *The Magic Flute.* Operas are sung in the original language, with Czech and occasionally English captions. Also hosts regular performances of ballet and modern dance. The location is less than ideal, across a busy highway and sandwiched between the main train station and the headquarters of Radio Free Europe. *Wilsonová 4. ☎ 224-227-266. www.opera.cz. Tickets 400 Kč–1,150 Kč. Metro: Muzeum. Map p 124.*

Church Concerts

★★★ **Church of Saints Simon and Jude (Kostel sv. Šimona a Judy)** STARÉ MĚSTO For a real treat, try to catch one of the Prague Symphony Orchestra's chamber concerts here. *Dušní. ☎ 222-002-336. www.fok.cz. Tickets 770 Kč–980 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.*

★★★ **St. James Basilica (Bazilika sv. Jakuba)** STARÉ MĚSTO A good place to catch organ recitals and concerts, particularly during the Easter and Christmas holidays. The church's enormous 18th-century

organ has been restored to its original sound. *Malá Štupartská 6. ☎ 604-208-490. www.audite organum.cz. Tickets 300 Kč–500 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.*

★ **St. Nicholas Church (Chrám sv. Mikuláše)** STARÉ MĚSTO A popular venue for afternoon and early-evening concerts done by private outfits looking to make a little cash on the side. Quality is uneven, but the Baroque church makes for a lovely place to sit and listen. *Staroměstské nám. ☎ 224-190-994. Tickets 400 Kč–600 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.*

★★ **St. Nicholas Church (Kostel sv. Mikuláše)** MALÁ STRANA The interior of this church is one of the great treasures of Prague Baroque. The concerts here are of high quality and the organizers are determined to vary the program, which like everywhere else seems top-heavy on Mozart, Brahms, and Vivaldi. *Malostranské nám. ☎ 257-534-215. www.psalterium.cz. Tickets 300 Kč–450 Kč. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 123.*

Jazz

★★★ **AghaRTA** STARÉ MĚSTO This atmospheric cellar from the Middle Ages is a wonderful place to catch a jazz concert. The hitch is that seating is very limited. The only way to get a chair is to arrive by 7pm and camp out until showtime at 9pm. *Železná 16. ☎ 222-211-275. www.agharta.cz. Tickets 200 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.*

★★ **Jazz Boat** STARÉ MĚSTO This passenger boat, the *Kotva,* cruises up and down the Vltava River nightly in season. They also serve decent food and drinks, including munchies like nachos to have as you groove. *Leaves at 8:30pm from pier no. 5 just below Čechův bridge. ☎ 731-183-180. www.jazzboat.cz. Tickets 590 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.*

★★ **Reduta** NOVÉ MĚSTO Thirty years ago this was Prague's preeminent venue for live music, and the interior hasn't changed a jot since then. If you'd like to see Fusion jazz played in an authentic '70s-style room, this is your place. *Národní třída 20. ☎ 224-933-487. www.redutajazzclub.cz. Tickets 200 Kč–300 Kč. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 124.*

★★ **U Malého Glena** MALÁ STRANA The name ("At Little Glen's") refers to the owner, a short

AghaRTA.

American guy named Glen, but it could also apply to the microscopic size of this cellar club. That's a shame, because on good nights you can't get anywhere near the music. Go early or try to reserve a table. *Karmelitská 23. ☎ 257-531-717. www.malyglen.cz. Tickets 200 Kč–300 Kč. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 123.*

★ **Ungelt** STARÉ MĚSTO This cozy cellar club, just a short walk from the Old Town Square, is one of the more recent jazz clubs to open and seems to cater more to tourists than locals. The program is big on blues and fusion. *Týnská 2. ☎ 224-895-748. www.jazzblues.cz. No admission charge. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.*

★★★ **U Staré Paní** STARÉ MĚSTO One of the few jazz clubs in town where you can also eat dinner. Good for when a big name is on the card and you have to get there early to get a table. Features mostly Czech players doing '70s- and '80s-style fusion and Latin mixes. Limited seating, so if you arrive after 9pm you're going to be standing up. *Michalská 9. ☎ 603-551-680. www.jazzlounge.cz. Tickets 200 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.*

Rock & Live Music

★★★ **Archa** NOVÉ MĚSTO This experimental stage hosts everything from visiting bands like The Talking Heads and Sonic Youth to local groups, and alternative dance and theater troupes. Check the website to see what's on. It's invariably good. *Na Poříčí 26. ☎ 221-716-333. www.archatheatre.cz. Tickets 200 Kč–600 Kč. Metro: Florenc. Map p 124.*

★ **Futurum** SMÍCHOV This legendary Prague metal club has smoothed over its rough edges and now mostly hosts popular "best of the '80s and '90s" dance nights. But the program still includes an occasional group of headbangers from the U.S. or Western Europe. *Zborovská 7. ☎ 257-328-571. www.musicbar.cz. Tickets 100 Kč–200 Kč. Metro: Anděl. Map p 123.*

★★★ **Lucerna Music Bar** NOVÉ MĚSTO A great underground bar and stage located below the Lucerna Pasáž shopping center just off Wenceslas Square. The weekday

U Malého Glena.

Palac Akropolis.

live acts tend toward medium-sized Czech bands, with a few international musicians thrown in. Weekends are given over to a wildly popular (and fun) retro '80s and '90s disco extravaganza. ***Vodičková 36. ☎ 224-217-108. www.musicbar.cz. Tickets 100 Kč–200 Kč. Metro: Mustek. Map p 124.***

★★★ **Palac Akropolis** ŽIŽKOV This former theater was rescued from demolition in the '90s and has now morphed into the most interesting performance venue in the city. The Akropolis regularly hosts visiting fringe bands from the U.S. like the Flaming Lips, as well as great Czech acts and groups from around the world. There's usually something cool going on. On off nights, DJs spin for dancing and drinking in the smaller rooms off the main hall. ***Kubelíková 27. ☎ 296-330-911. www.palacakropolis.cz. Tickets 50 Kč–500 Kč. Metro: Jiřího z Poděbrad. Map p 124.***

★ **Retro Music Hall** VINOHRADY This is the new kid on the block in suburban Vinohrady. As the name suggests, the club appears to be capitalizing on Praguers' insatiable interest in retro acts and rock dinosaurs. In 2007, Retro hosted aging British rockers the Yardbirds and Sweet, among others. ***Francouzská 4. ☎ 222-510-592. www.roxy.cz. Tickets 180 Kč–500 Kč. Metro: Náměstí Miru. Map p 124.***

★★ **Roxy** STARÉ MĚSTO Like the Akropolis, another former theater that's carved a niche as the city's leading venue for live performances of techno, electronic music, Asian dub, and other new sounds. The Old Town location has put a crimp on late-night noise, so concerts here tend to start and finish early. ***Dlouhá 33. ☎ 224-826-296. www.roxy.cz. Tickets 200 Kč–600 Kč. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 124.***

★ **Vagon** NOVÉ MĚSTO Informal rock venue with live acts most days of the week. The card is heavy on Czech and local revival bands. A recent month featured no less than revival bands for Led Zeppelin, Guns 'n' Roses, and Black Sabbath. Some of these guys are pretty good. ***Národní třída 25. ☎ 221-085-599. www.vagon.cz. Tickets 100 Kč–200 Kč. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 124.***

Vagon.

Buying Tickets

The cheapest tickets are at theater box offices, which are generally open daily until a few minutes before the start of a performance. Hotel reception desks and concierges are also usually able to secure tickets, the latter probably charging a service fee. If you're not sure exactly what you want to see or haven't worked out a schedule, drop by one of the following ticketing agencies. Most of the agencies generally sell tickets to the same events, though some may have exclusive arrangements. All charge a booking fee (usually around 60 Kč).

Bohemia Ticket International NOVÉ MĚSTO Good source for performances at the Národní Divadlo, Státní Opera, and the Stavovské Divadlo. Offers hotel delivery for 200 Kč. ***Na Příkopě 16. ☎ 224-215-031. www.ticketsbti.cz. Metro: Mustek. Map p 124.***

Ticket Art NOVÉ MĚSTO Decent ticket agency oriented toward concerts and musical theater productions. ***Politických vězňů 9. ☎ 222-897-552. www.ticket-art.cz. Metro: Mustek. Map p 124.***

TicketPro NOVÉ MĚSTO Probably the best all-around agency, with an easy-to-use website and helpful staff. The main office near the Mustek metro station is a good place to check for special events and big concerts that might be on while you're here. ***Rytířská 12. ☎ 296-329-999. www.ticketpro.cz. Metro: Mustek. Map p 124.***

TicketStream NOVÉ MĚSTO General ticketing agency is a good source for church concerts, shows at the Retro Music Hall (see above), and sporting events. Also sells tickets to the nightly performances of Don Giovanni in summer at the Stavovské Divadlo. ***Koubková 8. ☎ 224-263-049. www.ticketstream.cz. Metro: I.P. Pavlova. Map p 124.***

9 The Best **Lodging**

Lodging Best Bets

Best **Views**
★★★ Domus Henrici $$
Loretánská 11 (p 140)

Best **Hot Stones**
★★★ Hotel Le Palais $$$$
U Zvonařky 1 (p 141)

Best for **Honeymooners**
★★★ U Zlaté Studně $$$ *U Zlaté Studně 166/4 (p 145)*

Best for **Fashionistas**
★★ Josef $$$ *Rybná 20 (p 143)*

Best **Budget Hotel**
★★★ Castle Steps $ *Nerudová 7 (p 139)*

Best for **Minimalists**
★★★ Anděl's $$$ *Stroupežnického 21 (p 138)*

Best for **Music Lovers**
★★★ Aria $$$$ *Tržiště 9 (p 139)*

Best **if You Miss the 1960s**
★★ Yasmin $$$ *Politických vězňů 12 (p 146)*

Best **Socialist Realist Architecture**
★ Crowne Plaza $$$$ *Koulová 15 (p 139)*

Best **Luxury Chain Hotel**
★★★ Mandarin Oriental $$$$
Nebovidská 1 (p 143)

Best **Art Nouveau**
★★ Paříž $$$ *U Obecního Domu 1 (p 144)*

Best **Hideaway**
★★★ U Raka $$$ *Černínská 10 (p 145)*

Best for **Incurable Romantics**
★★★ Alchymist Grand Hotel and Spa $$$$ *Tržiště 19 (p 138)*

Best **Business Hotel**
★★ Marriott $$$ *V Celnici 8 (p 143)*

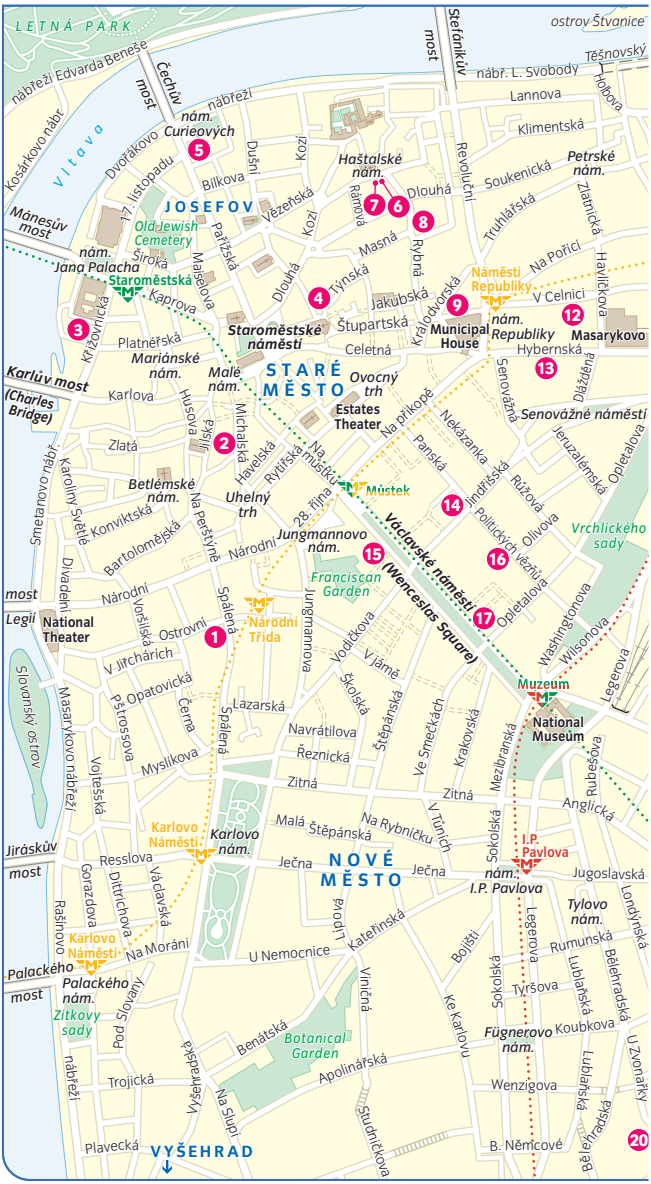
Alchymist Grand Hotel and Spa.

Malá Strana Area Lodging

Alchymist Grand Hotel and Spa 7	**Crowne Plaza** 1	**U Páva** 11
Anděl's 13	**Domus Henrici** 3	**U Raka** 2
Aria 8	**Mandarin Oriental** 12	**U Zlaté Studně** 10
Castle Steps 5	**Roma** 9	**U Žluté boty** 4
	Sax 6	

Photo p 133: The Royal Tower Suite at Pařiž.

Staré Město Area Lodging



Anna 19
Adria 15
Best Western Meteor Plaza 13
Claris 18
Černý Slon 4
Élite 1
Four Seasons 3
Haštal Hotel 6
Hilton Prague 10
Hotel Ibis Karlín 11
Hotel Le Palais 20
InterContinental Praha 5
Iron Gate Hotel and Suites 2
Jalta 17
Josef 8
Marriott 12
Maximilian 7
Palace Praha 14
Paříž 9
Yasmin 16

Prague Hotels A to Z

★★ **Adria** NOVÉ MĚSTO An 18th-century burgher's house on Wenceslas Square houses this newly renovated hotel. Good value if you want to be close to the action. The rooms are small but tasteful in a contemporary chain-hotel style. The Adria cuts rates during summer and offers discounts if you book over the Web. *Václavské nám. 26. ☎ 221-081-111. www.adria.cz. 88 units. Doubles 3,300 Kč–5,500 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Mustek. Map p 136.*

★★★ **Alchymist Grand Hotel and Spa** MALÁ STRANA Portions of this extravagantly restored Baroque townhouse date back to the 15th century. The owners spared no expense in creating arguably the most opulent, luxurious lodging in Prague, with canopy beds, hardwood floors, beautifully tiled bathrooms, and statues of cherubs peering from every pedestal. The website often offers weekend packages, with prices shaved by as much as a third off the rack rates. *Tržiště 19. ☎ 257-286-011. www.alchymisthotel.com. 46 units. Doubles 8,200 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 135.*

★★★ **Anděl's** SMÍCHOV You'll find this arty design hotel in up-and-coming Smíchov, 10 minutes by metro from the center. The aesthetic here could be described as hard-core minimalist, with the spare decor relieved by colorful pillows and spreads. The hotel's 2-day "Golden Prague" package includes a complimentary dinner, tour of the city, and airport transfers at about 80% of the standard room rate. *Stroupežnického 21. ☎ 296-889-688. www.andelshotel.cz. 230 units. Doubles 6,900 Kč–8,300 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Anděl. Map p 135.*

★★★ **Anna** VINOHRADY This elegant, family-run hotel occupies a 19th-century neoclassical townhouse in residential Vinohrady. There's not much in the way of services, but you'll get a warm welcome at the reception and satisfaction from knowing you're getting good value. Check the website for special offers. *Budečská 17. ☎ 222-513-111.*

Hotel Anna.

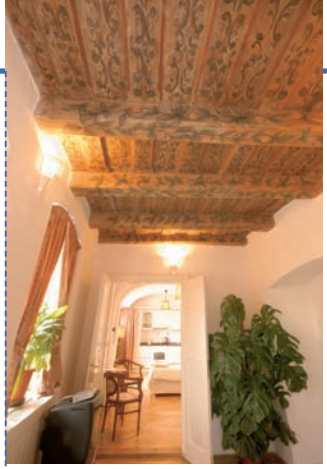
www.hotelanna.cz. 24 units. Doubles 2,500 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Miru. Map p 136.

★★★ **Aria** MALÁ STRANA Aria compares favorably to the nearby Alchymist Grand in terms of jaw-dropping luxury and room prices to match, but it's less showy. In keeping with the music theme, each of the 52 rooms and suites is named after a different composer or performer. Each has a different decor, ranging from tasteful contemporary to 19th-century period piece. The rooftop terrace commands an incredible view. *Tržiště 9. ☎ 225-334-111. www.ariahotel.net. 52 units. Doubles 8,800 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 135.*

★★ **Best Western Meteor Plaza** NOVÉ MĚSTO Rates have risen recently, but the Meteor Plaza remains a decent option. The Best Western standards are evident in the comfortable if uninspiring rooms. The location, down from the Powder Tower and 5 minutes from the Old Town, is excellent. *Hybernská 6. ☎ 224-192-559. www.hotelmeteor.cz. 73 units. Doubles 3,300 Kč–4,400 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 136.*

★★★ **Castle Steps** MALÁ STRANA Simple rooms, some with lovely views out the back, in a beautifully remodeled Baroque palais. Each one shares a bathroom and common kitchen. The best choice in town if you're looking for historic 17th-century Malá Strana atmosphere at a fraction of the Alchymist rates. *Nerudová 7. ☎ 257-531-941. www.castlesteps.com. 35 units. Doubles 1,200 Kč–2,000 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 135.*

★★ **Claris** VINOHRADY Similar to the Anna (see above)—a small, family-run hotel that's an excellent value. The hotel dates from the '30s and the exterior reflects some of that stripped-down, functionalist style. The rooms are plain but clean. Ask for one away from busy Slezská street. *Slezská 26. ☎ 242-446-111. www.hotel-claris.cz. 24 units. Doubles 2,500 Kč–3,000 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Miru. Map p 136.*



The Willow Room at Castle Steps.

★★ **Černý Slon** STARÉ MĚSTO This small hotel's ancient, atmospheric wine cellar sets it apart, as does its location—in a perfect part of the Old Town, a block away from Old Town Square. An excellent out-of-season choice, as rates drop by more than a quarter and the crowds that invariably stream past the hotel's doorstep thin to a mere trickle. The rooms are old-style charming, with creaky wooden floors and clean linens. *Týnská 1. ☎ 222-321-521. www.hotelcernyslon.cz. 16 units. Doubles 3,500 Kč–4,500 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 136.*

★ **Crowne Plaza** DEJVICE Given its location in suburban Dejvice, 20 minutes by tram from the center, the Crowne Plaza is overpriced. But fans of Socialist Realist architecture may want to stay here anyway. The hotel is Prague's best example of the early 1950s Stalinist "wedding cake" style and a real period piece. When the Holiday Inn group bought

Domus Henrici.

the property in the 1990s, they fittingly replaced the communist red star on the top with their own corporate green one. The interior has been thoroughly renovated, but many of the older Socialist murals and decorative elements remain. ***Koulová 15. ☎ 296-537-111. www.crowneplaza.cz. 254 units. Doubles 8,200 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Dejvická. Map p 135.***

★★★ **Domus Henrici** HRADČANY A sleek, upmarket bed-and-breakfast, a stone's throw from Prague Castle. Emperor Rudolf II was a former ownerand that feeling of exclusiveness lingers in the well-proportioned rooms, tasteful contemporary furnishings, and gorgeous views out the back toward Petřín Hill and Strahov Monastery. Check the website for specials. Rates generally drop in midsummer. ***Loretánská 11. ☎ 220-511-369. www.domus-henrici.cz. 8 units. Doubles 3,000 Kč–5,000 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Hradčanská. Map p 135.***

★★ **Élite** NOVÉ MĚSTO Another nicely renovated 14th-century townhouse, this one on a quiet side street in one of the busiest parts of town. Night revelers will appreciate that the main stop on the city's nighttime tram service is right around the corner. The rooms are a pleasing mix of period and contemporary, with some authentic antiques tossed. Ask to see the suite, with its 17th-century Renaissance frescoes. ***Ostrovní 32. ☎ 224-932-250. www.hotelelite.cz. 78 units. Doubles 3,000 Kč–5,000 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Národní třída. Map p 136.***

★★★ **Four Seasons** STARÉ MĚSTO When the Four Seasons opened a few years ago, it set new standards for Prague hotels. Everything—from the heart-stopping views toward the Charles Bridge to the seamless service to the award-winning Allegro restaurant (p 98)—is what you'd expect from the Four Seasons name. Oddly, at these prices, breakfast is not included in the rate. Check the Web for seasonal "4th night free" deals. ***Veleslavínová 2a. ☎ 221-427-000. www.fourseasons.com/prague. 161 units. Doubles 8,200 Kč–16,500 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 136.***

★ **Haštal Hotel** STARÉ MĚSTO The location, a beautiful and quiet part of the Old Town not far from the St. Agnes cloister, is the major draw at this smaller, locally owned hotel. The rooms are plain to the point of drab, but the prices, particularly off-season, are reasonable.

You'll get a 20% discount if you book online. ***Haštalská 6. ☎ 222-314-335. www.hastal.com. 24 units. Doubles 2,400 Kč–3,800 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 136.***

★★ Hilton Prague NOVÉ MĚSTO This is where President George W. Bush stays when he comes to Prague. It's easy to see why: The isolated location by a freeway is easy to protect. Inside, the hotel is all modern atriums and see-through elevators. It's the kind of hotel that always seems to be hosting five business conferences at once. Service is top-notch, but watch the add-ons—for example, parking costs another 800 Kč a night. ***Pobřežní 1. ☎ 224-841-111. www.prague.hilton.com. 775 units. Doubles 4,400 Kč–8,200 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Florenc. Map p 136.***

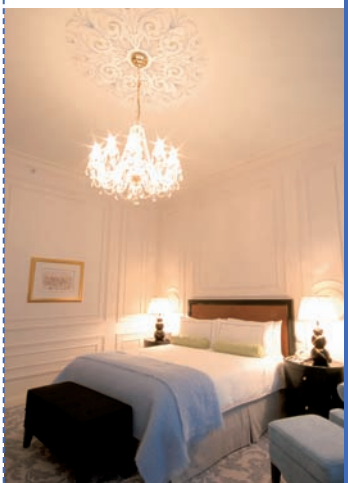
★★ Hotel Ibis Karlín KARLÍN Karlín is a gentrifying neighborhood outside the center of Prague (east of Old Town, along the river), but with excellent metro connections. It was hit hard by the 2002 floods, but has come back and is now home to a lively pub and theater scene. Like all Ibises, this is no-frills contemporary—a decent room at a decent price. ***Šaldová 54. ☎ 222-332-800. www.ibis.com. 226 units. Doubles 2,700 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Křižíkova. Map p 136.***

★★★ Hotel Le Palais VINOHRADY A special luxury boutique in a 19th-century Belle Epoque townhouse. With all the little reading rooms, hidden nooks, and places to cozy up to the fire with a glass of brandy, you won't want to leave the hotel. The fitness room is one of the nicest in the city, complete with aromatherapy, hot stones, and all the rest. The location in leafy Vinohrady is a plus. ***U Zvonařky 1. ☎ 234-634-635. www.palaishotel.cz. 60 units. Doubles 8,000 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Miru. Map p 136.***

★ InterContinental Praha STARÉ MĚSTO The hotel's 1970s Brutalist architecture was actually intended to mesh with the surrounding Jewish quarter in a style dubbed "ghetto moderne." Inside, it's easier on the eyes, with sleek sofas and silky fabrics. The rooms are clean and quiet, but small for the money. The fitness club downstairs, with an indoor pool, has great equipment. Popular with package tours. ***Náměstí Curieových 5. ☎ 296-631-111. www.ichotelsgroup.com. 372 units. Doubles 4,100 Kč–6,800 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 136.***

★★★ Iron Gate Hotel and Suites STARÉ MĚSTO Another beautiful boutique carved out of a series of Baroque burghers' houses, with many of the facade reliefs still intact. The rooms are different, so look at a couple before deciding. Many have the original wood-beamed ceilings. The tasteful contemporary decor toes the line between high style and comfort. ***Michalská 19. ☎ 225-777-777. www.irongate.cz. 44 units. Doubles 8,200 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 136.***

The Four Seasons.



Surviving Sticker Shock

It wasn't that long ago that the price of a decent hotel room in Prague, while not quite as good a deal as the beer, was at least affordable. Alas, with the strengthening Czech crown, prices have risen through the roof. Don't be surprised to find yourself paying more here than in Paris or Amsterdam for comparable accommodation. Of course, there's a silver lining. As prices have risen, so have standards, and smaller hotels in Malá Strana and parts of Old Town are some of the best you'll find in this part of the world.

There are some steps you can take to minimize the pain. Always check the hotel's website beforehand. Hotel owners are adept at adjusting rates according to demand, and impromptu cuts of 10% to 20% posted on the Web are not uncommon. Even if you arrive at the hotel with a fixed price in hand, it never hurts to ask if that's the best offer available. Also, consider traveling out of season if possible. January, February, November, and most of December are considered "low" season, and prices fall as much as 50% from spring and fall rates. Midsummer (July and Aug) is "shoulder" season, and a prime time to wheel and deal. The flip side of this is to avoid Prague over the New Year's and Easter holidays. Not only are there no deals to be had, but there are no beds either.

If hotels are just not in the budget, there are other options. Several agencies offer short-term apartment rentals for as short as a few days or as long as a month. These are often very nice apartments, with great central locations, at around half the price of comparable hotels (without the services, of course). **Apartments in Prague** (Petřínská 4, Malá Strana; ☎ **251-512-502;** http://apartments-in-prague.org) offers several units in Malá Strana, Old Town, and around the Charles Bridge. Another popular agency, **Prague Mary's Apartments** (Italská 31, Vinohrady; ☎ **222-254-007;** www.marys.cz), has properties all around the city at nearly every price point. Check the website to see photos.

As for hostels, Prague is filled with them, but most are seasonal affairs timed to open just as college classes are letting out. A few are more permanent and even offer the option of a private double at near-hostel prices. Try the **Clown and Bard** (Bořivojová 102, Žižkov; ☎ **222-716-453;** www.clownandbard.com), a longtime fixture on the hostel scene, and one of the easiest places in town to meet fellow travelers or expats who like to hang out at the hostel's pub.

★★ **Jalta** NOVÉ MĚSTO Even under communism, the Jalta was one of the better hotels in Prague. The Socialist Realist facade from the 1950s was thoroughly renovated in 2007 and has UNESCO protection as a world heritage site. The hotel's location, on the upper reaches of Wenceslas Square, is ideal for sightseeing. During the Velvet Revolution, it was the

Hotel Le Palais.

favored hotel of Western journalists, who could cover the anticommunist demonstrations from the hotel balcony without ever leaving their rooms. ***Václavské nám. 45. ☎ 222-822-111. www.jalta.cz. 94 units. Doubles 4,400 Kč–6,000 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Muzeum. Map p 136.***

★★ **Josef** STARÉ MĚSTO The Josef was one of the first minimalist boutiques to open up shop, and fans of updated mid-century modern—chrome and white—will find a second home here. The high style extends to the lobby and the all-white cocktail bar. The gorgeous chrome-and-glass rooms receive splashes of color from bedspreads or pillowcases. ***Rybná 20. ☎ 221-700-111. www.hoteljosef.com. 110 units. Doubles 4,700 Kč–7,400 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 136.***

★★★ **Mandarin Oriental** MALÁ STRANA My favorite of the five-star international chains. The Mandarin opened in 2006 in a restored 14th-century monastery, and has used the quirks and character of the building to strong advantage. There are no cookie-cutter corporate rooms here. The rooms feel fresh and clean, with white walls, parquet flooring, and big bouquets of flowers. The spa, in a former Renaissance chapel, defines minimalist chic. ***Nebovidská 1. ☎ 233-088-888. www.mandarinoriental.com. 99 units. Doubles 7,000 Kč–15,000 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 135.***

★★ **Marriott** NOVÉ MĚSTO This upmarket chain, which emphasizes comfort and business amenities over style, is a solid corporate choice. The location, just down from central Náměstí Republiky, is excellent. Easy-in, easy-out if you happen to be arriving by car. ***V Celnici 8. ☎ 222-888-888. www.marriott.com.***

Iron Gate Hotel and Suites.

290 units. Doubles 4,100 Kč–8,200 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 136.

★★ **Maximilian** STARÉ MĚSTO The Maximilian goes for the same light, modern, minimalist aesthetic as the Josef (see above), but it's not quite as chic. It does have a superb location, however, in an overlooked and beautiful part of the Old Town. Ask for a room with a view toward the nearby St. Agnes cloister. The rooms are spare, in keeping with the overall look, but comfortable. The hotel is short on amenities, but the location makes up for it. *Haštalská 14. ☎ 225-303-111. www.maximilianhotel.cz. 71 units. Doubles 3,800 Kč–7,700 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. Map p 136.*

★★ **Palace Praha** NOVÉ MĚSTO This was one of the first luxury properties to open in the early '90s and for a time was the best in town. Now it's starting to show its age. That said, the hotel has a great location, a couple blocks off Wenceslas Square, and the professional service, complete with concierge and doorman, is fully in keeping with the high expectations. *Panská 12. ☎ 224-093-111. www.palacehotel.cz. 124 units. Doubles 4,400 Kč–8,200 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Mustek. Map p 136.*

★★ **Paříž** STARÉ MĚSTO This beautiful Art Nouveau hotel recalls much of the glory of turn-of-the-century Prague and the interwar period under the First Republic. The "Paris" is a local landmark, and was immortalized in Hrabal's *I Served the King of England.* The public areas, restaurant, and cafe are pure Art Nouveau museum pieces. The rooms are plainer but comfortable. *U Obecního Domu 1. ☎ 222-195-195. www.hotel-paris.cz. 86 units. Doubles 4,400 Kč–8,200 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Náměstí Republiky. Map p 136.*

★ **Roma** MALÁ STRANA At this price point, you can probably do better at some of the other hotels in Malá Strana. The rooms are small and the stripped-down modern aesthetic is more plain than trendsetting. Nevertheless, it's a nice fallback with a great location, not far from the funicular to Petřín Hill. *Újezd 24. ☎ 222-500-222. www.hotel-roma-prague.com. 87 units. Doubles 3,300 Kč–4,400 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 135.*

★ **Sax** MALÁ STRANA You'll find this small, family-run hotel in a quiet

Josef.

Marriott.

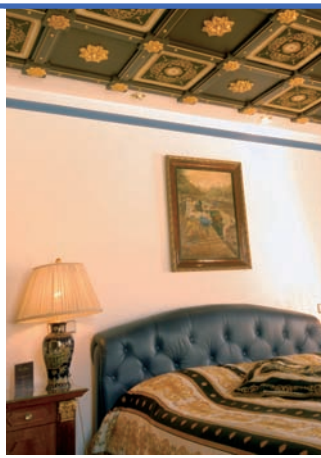
corner of Malá Strana. The hotel's 22 rooms are clean but spartan, with a bed, a desk, and a couple of chairs. This hotel's website is clunky and hard to navigate. But once you settle in, the friendliness of the staff will win you over. ***Jánský Vršek 3. ☎ 257-531-268. www.sax.cz. 22 units. Doubles 3,000 Kč–4,000 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 135.***

★★ **U Páva** MALÁ STRANA A member of the Czech chain of Romantic Hotels, which specializes in small, special properties. "At the Peacock" is situated on Kampa Island, with views both toward the river and up to the castle. Many rooms have the original wooden ceilings and antique furnishings. Ask for a castle view. ***U Lužického Semináře 32. ☎ 257-533-360. www.romantichotels.cz. 27 units. Doubles 4,100 Kč–6,600 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 135.***

★★★ **U Raka** HRADČANY Relax in the garden courtyard of this secluded luxury log cabin, and imagine you're at a country cottage. Stroll Nový Svět, the timeless lane on the far side of Prague Castle that leads up to U Raka, and feel like you have the entire city to yourself. Enjoy royal treatment at the Japanese spa. And by all means, book far in advance; the five rooms fill up fast. Special. ***Černínská 10. ☎ 220-511-100. www.romantikhotel-uraka.cz. 5 units. Doubles 5,000 Kč–6,000 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Hradčanská. Map p 135.***

★★★ **U Zlaté Studně** MALÁ STRANA An all-round perfect boutique, with drop-dead views of Malá Strana, gorgeous rooms with parquet flooring and period furnishings, and a renowned chef turning out gourmet meals for a bite on the

Pařiž.



U Páva.

terrace. The Renaissance house once belonged to Emperor Rudolf II and for a time housed the Danish astronomer Tycho de Brahe. ***U Zlaté Studně 166/4. ☎ 257-011-213. www.zlatastudna.cz. 24 units. Doubles 4,400 Kč–5,500 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 135.***

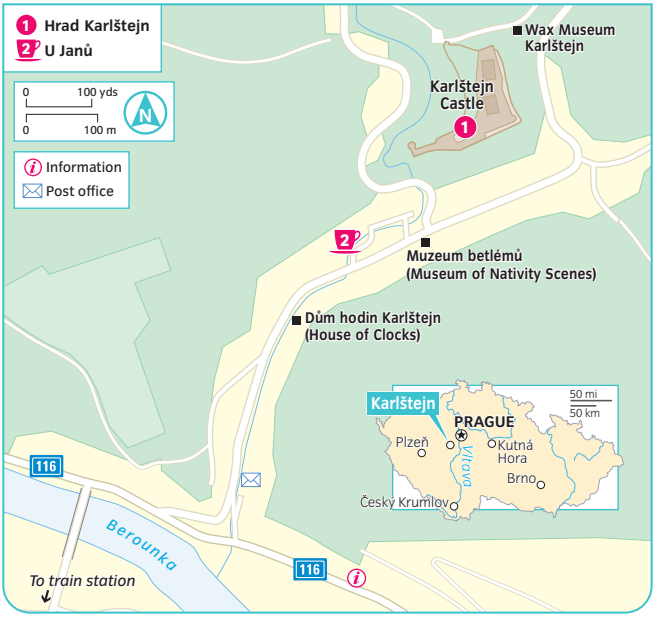
★★ U Žluté boty MALÁ STRANA
This cute, historic inn occupies one of the most picturesque areas of Malá Strana. Some rooms are still sided in original dark-wood beams. The room furnishings are simple; some rooms seem almost empty. During midsummer, the hotel runs a "stay 4 nights, pay for 3" special. ***Jánský Vršek 11. ☎ 257-532-269. www.zlutabota.cz. 9 units. Doubles 2,500 Kč–3,300 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská. Map p 135.***

★★ Yasmin NOVÉ MĚSTO
Another modern boutique, a la Hotel Josef (see above), but more fun, and less pretentious. Here, too the rooms are uncluttered variations of white and beige, but warm and inviting. The lobby's loopy, organic-shaped chairs and tables—think 1960s Goldie Hawn—are a welcome antidote to design aesthetics that take themselves too seriously. ***Politických vězňů 12. ☎ 234-100-100. www.hotel-yasmin.cz. 200 units. Doubles 6,000 Kč. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Muzeum. Map p 136.*** ●

U Raka.

10 The Best Day Trips & Excursions

Fairy Tale Karlštejn



Karlštejn is far and away the most popular Prague day trip—for both city residents and visitors. It's an easy 40-minute ride out on the train, and the quaint village, with its gingerbread-style houses guarded over by an enchanted-kingdom castle, is a welcome antidote to the city. The surrounding countryside is lovely and unspoiled. Plan on a leisurely day of strolling along the town's main road, popping in at the numerous gift shops and pubs as you make your way slowly up to the castle.

1 ★ **Hrad Karlštejn.** They don't come much more majestic than Karlštejn Castle, a high-Gothic beauty that dates from the middle of the 14th century (though much of the exterior was restored and embellished in the 19th century). The castle was built on orders of Charles IV to protect what were then the coronation jewels of the Holy Roman Empire. The jewels were later moved to Prague Castle during the turbulent 17th century (where they sit today under lock and key), leaving Karlštejn Castle pretty much empty. Even if you're not that much into castles, it's still fun to make the climb up here for the fabulous views. There are two tours on offer. Tour 1 is quicker and cheaper, and includes a nice overview of highlights like the Imperial Palace

Previous page: Český Krumlov.

Karlštejn Castle.

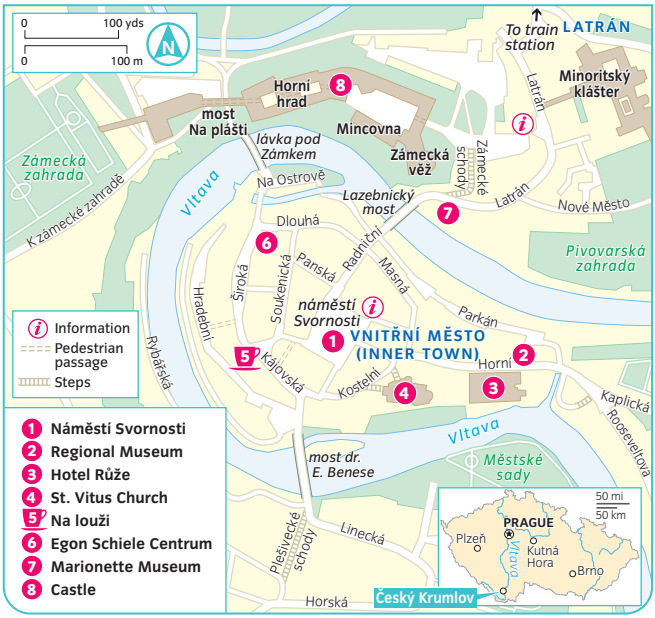
and Royal Bedroom. But it omits the real treasure: the jewel-studded Chapel of the Holy Rood, with its 2,000 precious and semiprecious inlaid stones. The chapel visit comes only with Tour 2, but the catch is you have to book that one in advance. If you have the time and interest, it's worth the effort. 🕘 ***2 hr. with tour, 1 hr. without. Karlštejn. ☎ 311-681-617, 274-008-154 (for reserving Tour 2). 220 Kč (Tour 1, includes guide), 300 Kč (Tour 2, includes guide). May–Sept Tues–Sun 9am–5pm; Oct–Jan Tues–Sun 9am–3pm; Mar–Apr 9am–3pm. (Closed Feb.)***

2 **U Janů** Let's face it. None of the restaurants in Karlštejn is going to win a Michelin star anytime soon. This little tavern at the top of the village, not far from the castle, at least has the advantage of a terrace in summer and a cozy fireplace inside during the colder months. The menu includes Czech standards like fried cheese, roast pork and dumplings, and even a decent trout. Excellent prices. ***Karlštejn 90. ☎ 311-681-210. $.***

Karlštejn: Practical Matters

There are no buses to Karlštejn from Prague, so trains are the only public transportation option. Trains leave approximately once an hour during the day from Prague's main station (Hlavní nadráží). If you don't see Karlštejn on the timetable, look for trains heading in the direction of Berouň. The trip costs about 40 Kč each way and takes about 40 minutes. The walk into the village from the train station takes about 20 minutes. If you'd like to drive, head west along the D5 motorway out of the city in the direction of Plzeň and then follow the signs to Karlštejn. Depending on traffic, you can make the drive in about 30 minutes.

Charming Český Krumlov



After Prague, it's hard to imagine being totally wowed by yet another riverside town in the Czech Republic. Well, prepare to be wowed. Český Krumlov's location, south of České Budějovice, feels impossibly remote. But back in the heyday of the landed aristocracy—in the 14th and 15th centuries—this was the seat of the powerful Rožmberk (Rosenberg) family, whose influence once spread far and wide in these parts. The family insignia—a five-petal rose—adorns castles and houses throughout southern Bohemia. The town's startling castle is second only to Prague Castle in terms of sheer moment. Český Krumlov is relatively compact and can easily be walked in a day. As you take the tour outlined below, feel free to meander at will, crossing the various bridges and poking down little alleyways and behind gates. There are surprises at every turn.

1 Náměstí Svornosti. Český Krumlov's main square is surprisingly quiet, but a good place to get your bearings. The Town Hall at no. 1—easily identified by the Renaissance arcades—houses the highly proficient tourist information office (a great source for learning about special events or exhibits that might be going on). The buildings on this square are some of the oldest in town, with cellars dating from the 13th century. *15 min. Náměstí Svornosti.*

2 Regional Museum (Okresní Muzeum). From Náměstí Svornosti, follow picturesque Horní ul., with some great panoramas over the city. This small museum and picture gallery offers an informative overview of the history of the town; it's worth the 30 minutes or so it takes to familiarize yourself with the basics. The very realistic miniature town model will help you get your bearings. *30 min. Horní 152. 380-711-674. 50 Kč. May–Sept 10am–5pm; Oct–Apr Tues–Fri 10am–4pm, Sat–Sun 1–4pm.*

3 Hotel Růže. Just across the street from the museum, this former Jesuit residence (and later army barracks) from the 16th century is now a privately owned luxury hotel. It's worth a peek inside to see how the Renaissance and Baroque touches have been restored. *15 min. Horní 154. 380-772-100.*

4 ★ St. Vitus Church (Kostel sv. Víta). Walk back toward the center of town and turn off on Kostelní. This enormous church was intended as an ecclesiastical counterweight to the secular authority of the castle. The church's steeple can be seen for miles around—and the view from on high is impressive. Construction of the church began in the late 14th century and was completed about 50 years later. It underwent the typical transformation into a more ornate Baroque church in the 17th century with the rise of Austrian influence. In the 19th century many of these Baroque elements, including an onion dome on top, were stripped away to restore its original Gothic appearance. *20 min. Kostelní. No phone. Daily 9am–5pm.*

Allow some time to wander Český Krumlov's cobblestone streets.

Český Krumlov's town square.

Krumlov Castle.

5 Na louži. Continue walking along Kostelní, which then becomes Kájovská street (don't worry if you get lost—all roads eventually lead back to the center). Na louži is a classic Czech pub that's been spruced up to accommodate visitors. They serve delicious home-cooked meals and some of the best fruit dumplings *(ovocné knedlíky)* in the Czech Republic. It can get crowded, so try to visit slightly before or after traditional meal hours. ***Kájovská 66. ☎ 380-711-280. $.***

6 ★★★ Egon Schiele Centrum. Walk left out the door from Na louži to find Široká street. Český Krumlov has always had a love-hate relationship with the controversial Austrian portraitist Egon Schiele. Schiele's mother was born here, and the painter had a fondness for the place. But when he moved here in the early years of the 20th century to paint his now-prized portraits of scantily clad girls, he was run out of town as a pornographer. Today, the Egon Schiele Centrum is one of the most innovative and outward-looking art museums in the Czech Republic. In addition to displaying a small but important collection of Schiele's own portraits and graphics, it hosts often-fascinating visiting exhibitions—for example, in 2007, the museum brought Keith Haring's comic illustrations to the Czech Republic for the first time. ***1 hr. Široká 70. ☎ 380-704-011. 120 Kč. Daily 10am–6pm.***

7 ★ kids Marionette Museum. Continue walking along Široká, then follow painfully

A fountain on the castle grounds.

Český Krumlov: Practical Matters

From Prague, you can take either the bus or the train to Český Krumlov. Buses are quicker and cheaper, and drop you off at Český Krumlov's convenient bus station, just a 5- to 10-minute walk from the main sites. Buses depart from Prague's Florenc bus station and the trip takes a little over 3 hours. Try to arrive well before departure time to get a seat; the buses tend to fill to capacity, especially on weekends. Trains leave from Prague's Hlavní nadráží and require a change in České Budějovice. Figure on about 4 hours in total. Český Krumlov's train station is a good 25-minute walk into town. If you're driving, follow the D1 motorway out of Prague, heading south toward Brno. Follow the signs first to České Budějovice and then once there to Český Krumlov. Depending on traffic, the trip takes about 3 hours.

picturesque Dlouhá (leaving time to pop in at shops along the way). Turn left at the main street, Radniční, and cross the bridge over the Vltava for an awesome photo op. At Latrán 6, you'll find this excellent collection of historical puppets, most dating from the 19th century, as well as sets from puppet theater. This museum is a local offshoot of the National Puppet Theater in Prague (p 127). *30 min. Latrán 6. 380-711-175. 70 Kč. Daily 10am–5pm.*

8 ★★★ **Castle (Hrad).** Just up from the museum on Latrán is the main entrance to the castle. This was the residence of the powerful Rožmberk family until the line died out at the beginning of the 17th century. It later fell into the hands of the Eggenberg family and then the Schwarzenberg family, the largest noble landholders in the Czech Republic. The castle was built up in stages, with the oldest part being the 13th-century observation tower, which was given its Renaissance appearance in the 16th century. The gardens are open year-round, but the interiors are accessible only from April to October, and by guided tour only. The tour possibilities are confusing, but most visitors will be content with Tour 1 (focusing on the Renaissance and Baroque interiors) and perhaps a scramble up the 162 steps to the top of the observation tower. Tour 2 focuses on the Schwarzenberg family. It's also possible to visit the lapidary (if you have a special interest in statues) and the Baroque theater. The tours take around an hour each. Be sure to leave yourself at least another hour to wander around and take in the upper gardens. *2 hr. Zámek 59. 380-704-711. Tour 1 160 Kč (includes guide), Tour 2 140 Kč (includes guide), theater tour 180 Kč, lapidary 20 Kč, tower 35 Kč. Apr–Oct Tues–Sun 9am–5pm (last tours start an hour before closing).*

Bone-Chilling Kutná Hora

Back in the early years of the Bohemian kingdom, in the 13th and 14th centuries, Kutná Hora was Prague's main rival for power and influence. The town grew rich on the back of the silver mines, and became a major financial center and even a secondary royal residence. Decline began to set in around the 16th century and what you see today is a smallish Czech town overshadowed by its splendiferous medieval past. That makes it all the more fun for a trip back into time. Kutná Hora is easily reachable from Prague by bus or rail. As an added bonus, you can visit possibly the most ghoulishly fascinating church in Central Europe.

1 ★★★ kids Bone Church (Kostnice). The interior of this small church is made up entirely of human bones. Altars, chalices, chandeliers . . . it simply must be seen to be believed. For centuries, the area was used as a mass burial ground. In the 19th century, a Czech woodcarver named František Rint came up with this unique solution for using the bones. *45 min. Zámecká 127 (Sedlec). 728-125-488. 40 Kč. Apr–Sept 8am–6pm; Oct–Mar 9am–noon, 1–4pm.*

2 ★ Stone House (Kamenný dům). The triangular gable on the front of the house is widely considered one of the high points of late Czech Gothic architecture. Now it holds a small offshoot of the Czech Silver Museum that focuses on life in the 18th century; it's worth the admission price for a look around inside. *20 min. Václavské nám. 327-512-821. 40 Kč. May–Sept 10am–6pm; Apr 10am–5pm; Oct–Nov 10am–4pm. (Closed Nov–Dec.)*

3 Plague Column (Morový sloup). The "Black Death" swept through Kutná Hora in 1713. This Baroque column dates from the period immediately after and was meant to ward off the plague. *Šultysová.*

4 ★ Italian Court (Vlašský dvůr). During the Middle Ages, this was the seat of considerable wealth and influence. It was here where the main workshops were housed for reworking the silver and minting coins. Operations were halted toward the end of the 16th century and the building fell into ruin. It was "rediscovered" in the 19th century and given a thorough neo-Gothic makeover, essentially what you see today. *30 min. Havlíčkovo nám. 327-512-873. 80 Kč. Apr–Sept 9am–6pm; Oct–Mar 10am–4pm.*

Fascinating, creepy Bone Church.

5 Church of St. James (Kostel sv. Jakuba). This stately, somber Gothic church is visible for miles around. The interior was reworked as Baroque in keeping with the fashion of the 17h century.

Kutná Hora: Practical Matters

Kutná Hora lies about 80km (50 miles) to the east of Prague, with regular connections during the day by train or bus. The hitch is that the train station is in Sedlec—close to the Bone Church—while the bus station is much closer to the center of town. The tour above assumes that you take the train into Kutná Hora, walk to the Bone Church from there, and then proceed into town. The return trip to Prague is by bus.Figure on about 90 minutes of travel each way and a cost of 60 Kč (by bus) or 90 Kč (by train) per trip. If you're driving, head east out of Prague along Vinohradská třída, continuing straight, picking up local highway no. 2 until you see signs to Kutná Hora. Figure on about an hour's drive.

Unfortunately, it's seldom open to the public, but you may be able to catch a Sunday service for a peek inside. ***Havlíčkovo nám. No phone. Sometimes open for Sun mass.***

6 ★★★ kids Czech Silver Museum (České Muzeum Stříbra/Hrádek). This 15th-century residence houses the main branch of the Czech Silver Museum and its collection of coins from the Middle Ages. The Renaissance-style painted ceilings are also valuable. But the real highlight of a visit here is the chance to descend into an abandoned silver mine. Great for kids, but not recommended for claustrophobics. ***1 hr. Barborská 28. 327-512-159. 110 Kč. Apr–Oct 9am–5pm.***

7 U Varhanáře. Delightful terrace restaurant connected to a small inn along the main walkway to St. Barbara's. The draw here is the commanding view out over the valley and the Czech specialties are well done. Service can be uneven. ***Barborská 578. 327-512-769. $$.***

8 ★★★ St Barbara's Cathedral. (Chrám sv. Barbory). This is widely considered the second-most-impressive Gothic cathedral in the country after St. Vitus at Prague Castle. Over the years, the masters who worked on the church read like a who's who of Czech Gothic and late-Gothic architecture. St. Barbara is considered the patron saint of miners, and the miner motifs are seen throughout the church. You'll need an hour to see the frescoes and chapels. ***1 hr. Barborská. No phone. 40 Kč. May–Sept Tues–Sun 9am–6pm; Oct–Apr Tues–Sun 9am–noon, 2–4pm.***

St. Barbara's Cathedral.

The **Savvy Traveler**

Before You Go

Government Tourist Offices

In the US: CzechTourism, 1109–1111 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10028 (☎ 212/288-0830, ext. 101). **In Canada:** CzechTourism, 401 Bay St., Suite 1510, Toronto, M5H 2Y4 (☎ 416/363-9928). **In the U.K. & Ireland:** CzechTourism UK, Scotland, and Ireland, 13 Harley St., London W1G 9QG (☎ 020/7631-0427).

The Best Times to Go

Prague is gorgeous in **spring,** when the trees blossom and the city shrugs off a long winter. **Fall** can be equally pleasant, with long, warm days and usually reliably sunny weather. Avoid travel over **Christmas, New Year's,** and **Easter,** when the city fills to brimming with tour groups from Germany and Italy. Midsummer is considered "in-between" season, with slightly lower hotel prices; but it can be stiflingly hot and many hotels lack air-conditioning. You might consider coming in low season, February and November, when the crowds thin and you finally feel you have this beautiful city to yourself.

Festivals & Special Events

SPRING. The **Prague Spring Music Festival** (www.festival.cz), held in late spring, is a world-famous, 3-week series of symphony, opera, and chamber performances. **Prague Khamoro** (www.khamoro.cz), usually held at the end of May, is a celebration of Roma (gypsy) culture. **Febiofest** (www.febiofest.cz), in March, is one of the largest non-competitive film and video festivals in Central Europe. Many of the films are shown in English or with English subtitles. The **One World** film festival (www.jedensvet.cz), also in March, brings together the best human rights and documentary films of the past year. Many of the screenings are in English.

SUMMER. The summer kicks off with the **Prague Writers' Festival** (www.pwf.cz) in June. A handful of contemporary writers from around Europe and the United States, including usually a couple big names, hold readings, book signings, lectures, and happenings. **Tanec Praha** (Dance Prague; www.tanecpraha.cz) is an international dance festival in June that focuses on contemporary dance and movement theater. **United Islands** (www.unitedislands.cz) festival, usually a long weekend in June, is a carnival of jazz, rock, folk, and house music spread out over several islands in the Vltava River.

FALL. The **Prague Autumn Music Festival** (www.pragueautumn.cz), in late September and October, is similar to the spring festival but the focus is more on orchestral music, bringing some of Europe's best ensembles to play at Prague's Rudolfinum. The weeklong **Prague International Jazz Festival** (www.jazzfestivalpraha.cz), each October, attracts some of the world's best jazz musicians. Performances are usually held in the Lucerna Music Hall and the city's oldest jazz venue, Reduta.

WINTER. The Christmas season begins on **St. Nicholas Eve** (Dec. 5), when children traditionally dress as St. Nicholas, the devil, or an angel. The annual Prague Christmas Market in Old Town Square gets going about then. Stalls hawk all manner of food, mulled wine,

Previous page: Prague's trams let you cover a lot of ground for a little money.

MONTHLY AVERAGE TEMPERATURE

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE
Daily Temp (°F)	30	33	40	48	57	63
Daily Temp (°C)	0.9	0.8	4.6	9.2	14.2	17.5

	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Daily Temp (°F)	66	65	58	49	39	33
Daily Temp (°C)	19.1	18.5	14.7	9.7	4.4	0.9

ornaments, and cheap gifts in a festive atmosphere that toes a fine line between traditional and tacky. **New Year's Eve** is literally a blowout—and the entire town comes out to light firecrackers on Old Town Square, Wenceslas Square, and Charles Bridge. Watch your head, as every year hundreds of people are injured by errant bottle rockets.

The Weather

Spring and **fall** generally bring the best weather for touring, with warm days and cool nights. **Summers** can be hit or miss, with some years bringing lots of rain and others weeklong stretches of hot sunshine. **Winters** can be cold and unusually long, sometimes lasting into April. Rain is a possibility at any time of year, so be sure to pack an umbrella.

Useful Websites

- **www.pis.cz/en:** The city's main tourist information portal. Good source for general information and cultural calendars. Includes an excellent "ABC Listing" for tourists on everything from accommodations to weather.
- **www.mapy.cz:** Online maps and journey planner; covers Prague and the entire Czech Republic. Simply type in an address and a map shows you exactly where it is.
- **www.dp-praha.cz:** The ins and outs of Prague's public transportation system, including system maps and info on tickets and travel passes.
- **www.idos.cz:** Online timetable for trains and buses, including international destinations. Just type in the city (using the Czech spellings, for example, "Praha" for Prague) and you'll get a complete listing of train and bus connections.
- **www.praguemonitor.com:** Excellent online English magazine about all things Prague and Czech. Good sections on politics and economics, and a lifestyle section that includes cultural listings and restaurant reviews.

Cellphones (Mobile Phones)

Czech cellphones operate on a GSM band of 900/1800MHz. This is the same standard in use throughout Europe but different from the one used in the U.S. **U.S. mobiles** will work here provided that they are tri-band phones (not all phones are tri-band) and that you've contacted your service provider to allow for international roaming. Keep calls to a minimum, however, since roaming charges can be steep. **U.K. mobiles** should work without any problem provided that you've contacted your service provider to activate international roaming (the same precautions about steep prices apply to U.K. mobiles.) One way of avoiding international roaming charges is to

purchase a pay-as-you-go SIM card for your cellphone and a prepaid calling card. This provides you with a local number and allows you to make calls and send text messages at local rates. All of the major local telephone operators offer this service. Vodaphone (www.vodafone.cz) offers a visiting SIM card, including 200 Kč of phone credit, for 200 Kč.

Car Rentals

There's very little need to rent a car in Prague, but if you're determined to do so, it's usually cheapest to book a car online before you leave home. All of the major rental agencies offer cars in Prague (with pick-up either in town or at the airport). Try Hertz (www.hertz.com), Avis (www.avis.com), or Budget (www.budget.com).

Getting **There**

By Plane

Prague's busy international airport, known as Ruzyně (☎ 220-113-314; www.prg.aero), lies about 18km (11 miles) west of the center of town. The airport has two main passenger terminals, North 1 and North 2 (in Czech: Severin 1 and Severin 2). North 1 handles destinations outside the European Union, including most overseas flights, as well as flights from the U.K. North 2 handles what are considered "internal" flights, within the European Union. Prague is well served by European and international carriers, including several budget airlines. The Czech national carrier, CSA (www.csa.com), operates regular direct service to New York's JFK airport, as well as Toronto and Montreal. Delta Airlines (www.delta.com) offers direct service between Prague and Atlanta.

From Ruzyně to town: Taxis are the quickest but most expensive option. Two cab companies are licensed to operate at the airport. The more reliable of the two is "AAA" (☎ 222-333-222; www.aaa-taxi.cz), which maintains stands outside both main terminals. Fares with AAA average about 600 Kč to the center. The trip takes about 25 minutes. If you're staying in the immediate center of town, a cheaper alternative is the minibus operated by CEDAZ (☎ 220-114-296). Minibuses run regularly between the airport and central Náměstí Republiky for 90 Kč per person. The most affordable alternative is public transportation. City bus no. 119 stops at both terminals and runs regularly from the airport to Dejvická metro station (on Line A). Bus no. 100 runs south from the airport to the area of Zličín, and connects to metro Line B. Travel on both requires a 20 Kč ticket purchased from the driver or from yellow ticket machines. Buy two tickets if you're carrying large luggage. A special Airport Express (designated "AE" on buses) runs from Ruzyně to Prague's Holešovice train station and costs 45 Kč per person. This is convenient if you are connecting directly to an international train leaving from Holešovice station.

By Car

The main highways into Prague are the D-1 motorway from the east (Brno, Bratislava, and connections to Kraków and Budapest); the D-5 from the south and west (Plzeň, Nürnberg, and Munich, with connections to Italy and points in Western Europe); the D-8 from the north (Dresden, Berlin).

By Train

The Czech Republic is not a member of the Eurail network and the Global Eurailpass is not valid here, though there are a number of other options. The **European East Pass** and the **Austria-Czech Republic** pass (www.railpass.com) are both accepted. The European East pass, including Austria, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary, for example, offers 5 days of unlimited rail travel within a calendar month for $187 (second-class). **RailEurope** (www.raileurope.com) offers a couple of passes valid only within the Czech Republic, including a Czech Flexipass giving 3 days of unlimited travel within 15 calendar days for $86 (second-class). The passes must be purchased in North America before you leave on your trip.

Many rail passes are available in Great Britain for travel to the Czech Republic, including the popular **InterRail** and **InterRail Youthpass** (www.internationalrail.com). It's also possible to purchase an InterRail–Czech Republic pass offering 3 days of unlimited travel in the Czech Republic within 1 month for £36. To purchase an InterRail pass you must be a permanent resident of one of the participating countries (residents of the U.S. and Canada are prohibited).

International trains arrive at either the main station, Hlavní nádraží (Wilsonova 80, Prague 1; ☎ 224-614-071; metro stop: Hlavní nádraží, Line C), or the northern suburban station, Holešovice (Vrbenského ul., Prague 7; ☎ 224-615-865; metro stop: Nádraží Holešovice, Line C). This is a source of endless confusion, so look carefully at the tickets or ask if in doubt. The website www.idos.cz has an online timetable for train departures.

Prague lies on major east–west and north–south rail lines, with good connections to Dresden and Berlin to the north, and Brno, Vienna, Bratislava, and Budapest to the south and east. **New high-speed rail service,** the Pendolino, was recently introduced on the Prague–Vienna run, shortening the travel time to Vienna to a little over 4 hours.

By Bus

The main European international bus line, **Eurolines** (www.eurolines.com), maintains regular service to Prague from around Europe. International buses arrive and depart from Prague's Florenc bus station (Křižíkova 5, Prague 8; ☎ 900-144-444; metro stop: Florenc, Line C).

Getting **Around**

On Foot

Prepare to do plenty of walking. Most of the center of the city is closed to vehicles, including taxis, meaning you'll have to walk pretty much everywhere. Distances are relatively close, but be sure to wear comfortable shoes, since many of the streets are paved (if that's the right word . . .) with cobblestones.

By Public Transportation

Prague's public transportation system (www.dp-praha.cz) of metros, trams, and buses is excellent. A 20 Kč ticket, which you can buy at tobacco kiosks or from yellow ticket machines, gives you 75 minutes (90 min. on weekends) of unlimited travel on any metro, tram, or bus. For shorter journeys, a 14 Kč ticket

gives you 20 minutes of travel (30 min. on the metro) but prohibits transfers. For longer stays, you can buy a 24-hour ticket for Kč 80, or 3-day (Kč 220), 7-day (Kč 280), or 15-day (Kč 320) passes. On metros, validate tickets in punching machines located at the top of the escalators. On trams and buses, these machines are located in the vehicle. Hold on to your ticket until the end of the journey. Spot-checks are infrequent, but fines are steep.

By Taxi

Taxis rates are reasonable, but watch for dishonest drivers. In an honest cab, the meter will start at around 40 Kč and rise 28 Kč per kilometer after that. Fares for destinations within the center should not be higher than 150–200 Kč. Refrain from hailing cabs on the street; instead order cabs by phone. AAA (☎ 222-333-222; www.aaa-taxi.cz) employs honest drivers, and operators speak English. Rates are also cheaper if ordered by phone.

By Car

Driving is not recommended as traffic is heavy and many areas of the central city are closed to motor vehicles. Parking can be difficult. You'll need a special sticker to park in the center (available only to residents) or pay very high short-term rates. If you arrive by car, the cheapest option is to find a spot in one of the neighborhoods well outside of the center, where parking is free.

Prague's **Architectural Mix**

Look up. That's maybe the best advice we can give you. Prague's majestic mix of medieval, Renaissance, and Art Nouveau architecture shares one fairly universal element—the most elegant and well-appointed facades and fixtures aren't at eye level or even street level, but are on top floors and roofs. Hundreds of buildings are decorated with intricately carved cornices or ornamental balconies and friezes depicting mythical, religious, or heroic figures.

The grime of Prague pollution has been gradually stripped away, and each restored building reveals previously obscured details. What's interesting, though, is how visitors react to the grime. When people visit Paris or Venice and see dirty, crumbling buildings, they consider them quaint. When they see the same old, dirty, crumbling buildings in Prague, however, they point to the failure of Communism—not entirely fair. If you look at photos of Prague taken in 1900, you'll also see dirty, crumbling buildings.

The city's earliest extant forms are Romanesque, dating from 1100 to 1250. The long Gothic period followed from 1250 to 1530. You'll find many Gothic buildings in Staré Město. Plus Prague Castle's most visible superstructure, St. Vitus Cathedral, is a Gothic masterpiece—that is, its older east-facing half (the cathedral's western sections exemplify Renaissance and neo-Gothic styles). From 1500 to the early 1600s, the Italian Renaissance style prevailed.

Many of the best-known structures are Baroque and rococo, sharply tailored in the high Austrian style inspired by the Habsburgs of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Some of the most flamboyant buildings are Art Nouveau, popular from 1900 to 1918. The movement that swept across Europe developed with the Industrial Revolution.

Innovative building materials—primarily steel and glass—opened endless possibilities for artistic embellishments. Architects abandoned traditional stone structures, built in a pseudo-historic style. Art Nouveau is characterized by rich, curvaceous ornamentation that seems sadly to have vanished in the push for functionalism later in the 20th century.

Several intriguing cubist designs from that era have also been hailed for their ingenuity. As an architectural style, cubism thrived in Bohemia, and you can find many examples in the neighborhood below Vyšehrad Park.

The late 20th century played havoc with Prague's architecture. Communists were partial to functionalism with virtually no character. Their buildings shed all decorative details. You shouldn't leave Prague before taking the metro out to Prosek to see the thousands of Communist-era flats, called "rabbit huts" even by their occupants. Created partly out of socialist dogma and partly out of economic necessity, these prefabricated apartment buildings *(paneláks)* were named after the concrete slabs used to build them. Cheap and unimaginatively designed, the apartment buildings are surrounded by a featureless world. Exteriors were made of plain, unadorned cement, and halls were lined with linoleum. The same room, balcony, and window design was stamped over and over.

But *panelák* living wasn't always viewed as a scourge. Unlike the larger, older apartments, *paneláks* had modern plumbing and heating and were once considered the politically correct way to live.

Two major post-Communist projects have already triggered a new debate among the progressives and the traditionalists. The Myslbek shopping/office complex on Na Příkopě near Wenceslas Square is the business district's first attempt at blending the new with the old in a functional yet elegant way. And the so-called Dancing Building on the embankment at the Rašínovo nábřeží has conservative tongues wagging. Its design strays from the 19th-century Empire classical houses lining the river, but in a most peculiar way. Controversial U.S. architect Frank Gehry, who designed the American Center in Paris, and New Wave designer Vlado Milunič have created a building that ironically pays tribute to the most classic of film dancing pairs: Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Built as the Prague office of a Dutch insurance company, the building depicts the two intertwined in a spin above the Vltava.

Recommended **Films & Books**

Films

Czech filmmaking has a long tradition. The Prague studios in the Barrandov Hills churned out glossy pre-Communist romantic comedies and period pieces rivaling the output of Paris, Berlin, and even Hollywood at the time.

While Czech literature and music have carved their places in classical culture, the country's films and their directors have collected the widest praise in the mid– to late 20th century. Cunning, melancholy views of Bohemian life (before the Soviets moved in for a few decades) were captured by some of the finest filmmakers in the era known as the "Czech New Wave" of the 1960s.

Directors Jiří Menzel and Miloš Forman were in the vanguard. An easy-to-find example of this period's work (with English subtitles) is Menzel's Oscar-winning *Closely Watched Trains,* a snapshot of the odd routine at a rural Czech train station.

Forman made his splash with a quirky look at a night in the life of a town trying to have fun despite itself. *The Fireman's Ball* shows Forman's true mastery as he captures the essence of being stone-bored in a gray world, yet he still makes it strangely intriguing. Of course, this was made before Forman emigrated to the big budgets of Hollywood and first shocked Americans with *Hair.* He then directed the Oscar-winning *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. For *Amadeus,* Forman sought authenticity, so he received special permission from the Communists to return to Prague; while filming, he brought back to life the original Estates' Theater (Stavovské divadlo), where Mozart first performed. Forman also consulted a friend, then-President Václav Havel, before choosing Courtney Love as the pornographer's wife in the Oscar-nominated *The People vs. Larry Flynt*. Havel loved the choice but refused to attend a private 1996 screening in Prague along with Flynt himself.

Czech-based directors after the New Wave mostly disappeared from view, but one stunningly brave film was made in 1970, as the repressive post-invasion period known as "normalization" began its long, cold freeze of talent. In *The Ear (Ucho),* director Karel Kachyňa presents the anguished story of a man trapped in an apartment wired for sound, subject to the Communist leaders' obsession and paranoia with Moscow. That *The Ear* was made in the political environment of the time was astounding. That it was quickly banned wasn't. Fortunately, local TV has dusted off copies from the archives, and it has begun playing to art-house audiences again.

But maybe a new Czech wave has begun. The father-and-son team of Zdeněk and Jan Svěrák won the Best Foreign Film Oscar in 1997 for *Kolja,* the bittersweet tale of an abandoned Russian boy grudgingly adopted by an aging Czech bachelor on the cusp of the 1989 revolution. After a previous Oscar nomination for the 1992 *Elementary School (Obecná škola),* the 30-something director Jan and his actor father are making an industry out of golden reflections about Czech life.

Prague has become a popular location for major motion pictures, in spite of itself. Producer/actor Tom Cruise and director Brian De Palma chose it for the stunning night shots around Charles Bridge in the early scenes of *Mission: Impossible.* During shooting, a verbal brawl broke out with Czech officials, who jacked up the rent for use of the riverside palace that acts as the American Embassy in the film (the palace is actually claimed by the von Liechtenstein family). *Immortal Beloved,* a story of Beethoven, made use of Prague's timeless streets (shooting around the graffiti).

Finally, *The Beautician and the Beast,* starring "Bond" hunk Timothy Dalton and nasal-siren Fran Drescher, uses Prague as a mythical East European capital invaded by a Brooklyn hairdresser (who makes pretty good use of her Frommer's guidebook while traveling through faux-Prague).

Still, the film about Prague probably most familiar to American audiences is *The Unbearable Lightness of Being,* based on the book by émigré author Milan Kundera. Set in the days surrounding the Soviet invasion, the story draws on the psychology of three Czechs who can't escape their personal obsessions

while the political world outside collapses around them. Many Czechs find the film disturbing, some because it hits home, others because they say it portrays a Western stereotype.

Books

Any discussion of Czech literature with visiting foreigners usually begins with Milan Kundera. Reviled among many Czechs who didn't emigrate, Kundera creates a visceral, personal sense of the world he chose to leave in the 1970s for the freedom of Paris. In *The Unbearable Lightness of Being,* the anguish over escaping the Soviet-occupied Prague he loves tears the libidinous protagonist Dr. Tomáš in the same way the love for his wife and the lust for his lover do. More Czech post-normalization angst can be found in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* and *Laughable Loves.* Kundera's biting satire of Stalinist purges in the 1950s *The Joke,* however, is regarded by Czech critics as his best work.

Arnošt Lustig, a survivor of the Nazi-era Terezín concentration camp and author of many works, including *Street of Lost Brothers,* shared the 1991 *Publishers Weekly* Award for best literary work with John Updike and Norman Mailer. In 1995, he became the editor of the Czech edition of *Playboy.*

The best work of renowned Ivan Klíma, also a survivor of Terezín, is translated as *Judge on Trial,* a study of justice and the death penalty.

Jaroslav Hašek wrote the Czech harbinger to *Forrest Gump* in *The Good Soldier švejk,* a post–World War I satire about a simpleton soldier who wreaks havoc in the Austro-Hungarian army during the war.

Bohumil Hrabal, noted for writing about the Czech Everyman and maybe the country's all-time favorite author, died in early 1997 when he fell (so they said officially) out of a fifth-story window while trying to feed pigeons. His death was eerily similar to the fate of a character in one of his stories. He had two internationally acclaimed hits: *Closely Watched Trains* (also translated as *Closely Observed Trains,* on which the Menzel film was based) and *I Served the King of England.* When then-President Bill Clinton visited Prague in 1994, he asked to have a beer with Hrabal in the author's favorite Old Town haunt, the pub U Zlatého tygra (At the Golden Tiger). Clinton may have gotten more than he bargained for, as the gruff but lovable Hrabal, who turned 80 that year, lectured the president on his views of the world.

No reading list would be complete without reference to Franz Kafka, Prague's most famous novelist, who wrote his originals in his native German. *The Collected Novels of Franz Kafka,* which includes *The Castle* and *The Trial,* binds his most claustrophobic works into a single volume.

If it's contemporary philosophy you want, there is, of course, the philosopher ex-president. Václav Havel's heralded dissident essay, "The Power of the Powerless," explained how the lethargic masses were allowing their complacency with Communism to sap their souls. His "Letters to Olga," written to his wife while in prison in the 1980s, takes you into his cell and his view of a moral world. Available are two solid English-translated compilations of his dissident writings: *Living in Truth* and *Open Letters. Disturbing the Peace* is an autobiographical meditation on childhood, the events of 1968, and Havel's involvement with Charter 77. His first recollections about entering politics are in "Summer Meditations," a long essay written during a vacation.

While he hasn't had much time to write since his presidency, Havel

says that his speeches given around the world continue a dialogue about morality in politics. If you read the anthology of his presidential speeches, *Toward a Civil Society,* you'll find it clear that Havel hasn't stopped being the dissident. However, now his target is incompetence and corruption in politics and society, including in democracies.

Madeleine Albright's father, diplomat Dr. Josef Koerbel, wrote a definitive contemporary history of his homeland in his final book, *Twentieth Century Czechoslovakia,* before his death in 1977. More than an academic study, it reads as a personal memoir of Prague's chaotic events, many of which he witnessed.

Finally, for an epic intellectual tour of the long, colorful, and often tragic history of the city, try the 1997 release of *Prague in Black and Gold* by native son and Yale literature professor Peter Demetz.

Fast **Facts**

APARTMENT RENTALS **Apartments In Prague** (Petřínská 4; ☎ 251-512-502; www.apartments-in-prague.org) has a good selection of nicely furnished short-term rentals in excellent areas like Malá Strana and near the Charles Bridge. **Residence Belgicka** (Belgická 12, Prague 2; ☎ 221-401-800; www.mamaison.com) offers high-end apartment rentals for short- or long-term stays in the upscale suburb of Vinohrady.

ATMS/CASHPOINTS The easiest and best way to get cash abroad is through an ATM—the Cirrus and PLUS networks span the globe. Bank fees average about 1%–2% of the transaction.

BABYSITTING **Prague Family** (☎ 737-749-019) offers special hotel babysitting as well as activity programs for young children.

BANKING HOURS Most banks are open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 5pm.

BIKE RENTALS Try **City Bike Prague** (Královdvorská 5, Prague 1; ☎ 776-180-284; www.citybike-prague.com).

BUSINESS HOURS Stores are typically open Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm and on Saturday from 9am to 1pm; those in the center often keep longer hours and may be open on Sundays and holidays as well. Museums are often closed on Mondays.

CLIMATE Prague has a continental climate with four distinct seasons, including often cold and snowy winters and occasionally hot summers, though temperatures rarely exceed about 32°C (90 °F).

CONSULATES & EMBASSIES **United States Embassy,** Tržiště 15 (☎ 257-530-663); **Canadian Embassy,** Muchová 6 (☎ 272-101-800); **United Kingdom Embassy,** Thunovská 14 (☎ 257-402-111); Irish Embassy, Tržiště 13 (☎ 257-530-061); **Australian Embassy,** Klimentská 10 (☎ 251-018-359).

CREDIT CARDS Credit cards are a safe way to carry money. They also provide a convenient record of all your expenses, and they generally offer good exchange rates. You can also withdraw cash advances from your credit cards at banks or ATMs, provided you know your PIN. (Call the number on the back of your card if you don't know yours.) Keep in mind that when you use your credit card abroad, most banks assess a 2% fee above the 1% fee

charged by Visa, MasterCard, or American Express.

CUSTOMS Baggage checks at airports are rare. You're permitted to bring in reasonable amounts of tobacco products and alcohol for personal use.

DENTISTS & DOCTORS See "Emergencies," below.

DRUGSTORES After regular hours, ask at your hotel where the nearest 24-hour pharmacy is. You'll also find the address posted on the doors or windows of other drugstores in the neighborhood. One all-night drugstore is **Lékárna U Svaté Ludmily,** in Vinohrady, Belgická 37 (☎ 224-237-207).

ELECTRICITY The Czech Republic operates on the standard European 220V with a two-pronged plug with round pins. U.S. appliances will need a transformer and a plug adapter. Laptops usually require only a plug adapter.

EMBASSIES See "Consulates & Embassies," above.

EMERGENCIES Dial the following telephone numbers in an emergency: 112 (general emergency, equivalent to U.S. 911); 155 (ambulance); 158 (police); 150 (fire); 1230, 1240 (emergency road service). For emergency medical treatment, go to the **Nemocnice Na Homolce** (Hospital Na Homolce), Roentgenova 2 (☎ 257-271-111). If you need nonurgent medical attention, practitioners in most fields can be found at the **Canadian Medical Center,** Veleslavínská 1, 9e (☎ 235-360-133). For dental service, call **American Dental Associates,** V Celnici 4 (☎ 221-181-121), Monday through Friday from 8am to 6pm, and Saturday from 8am to noon.

EVENT LISTINGS The best source of weekly information in English is ***The Prague Post*** (www.praguepost.com), available at newsstands for Kč 50 a copy. The Prague edition of the ***In Your Pocket*** guides—updated quarterly—is available at bookstores and is a good source of restaurant, hotel, and club listings, as well as an entertaining, opinionated overview of what's out there.

FAMILY TRAVEL (www.familytravel.com) is an independent, U.S.-based website offering reviews, sightseeing suggestions, and more.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELERS The Czech Republic is a tolerant society, and gay and lesbian travelers should have no particular problems. The website **prague.gayguide.net** is a useful resource for events, clubs, and gay-friendly hotels and restaurants.

HOLIDAYS Public holidays include New Year's Day (Jan 1); Easter Monday (Mar or Apr); Labor Day (May 1); Liberation Day (May 8); Sts. Cyril & Methodius Day (July 5); Death of Jan Hus (July 6); St. Wenceslas Day (Sept 28); Founding of the Czechoslovak Republic (Oct 28); Student Demonstration of 1989 (Nov 17); Christmas (Dec 24, 25); and St. Stephen's Day (Dec 26).

INSURANCE North Americans with homeowner's or renter's insurance are probably covered for lost luggage. If not, inquire with **Travel Assistance International** (☎ 800/821-2828) or **Travelex** (☎ 800/228-9792). These insurers can also provide trip-cancellation, medical, and emergency-evacuation coverage abroad. The website www.moneysupermarket.com compares prices across a wide range of providers for single- and multitrip policies. For U.K. citizens, insurance is always advisable.

INTERNET CAFES Central Prague is filled with Internet cafes. Rates run about 1 Kč a minute. To surf the Net or check e-mail, try **Bohemia Bagel** at Masná 2 (Old Town)

(☎ 257-310-694; www.bohemiabagel.cz).

LIQUOR LAWS You can buy alcohol (beer, wine, and spirits) at supermarkets, convenience stores, cafes, and bars. The legal age for buying and consuming alcohol is 18, though ID checks are practically unheard of. The blood-alcohol limit for driving a car is zero, and motorists face a stiff fine.

LOST PROPERTY If your luggage is lost, immediately file a lost-luggage claim at the airport, detailing the luggage contents. For most airlines, you must report delayed, damaged, or lost baggage within 4 hours of arrival.

MAIL & POSTAGE Most post offices in Prague are open Monday through Friday from 8am to 7pm. The main post office (Hlavní pošta), at Jindřišská 14, Prague 1 (☎ 221-131-111), is open 24 hours a day. Stamps can sometimes be purchased from your hotel reception desk.

MONEY The Czech currency is the crown (koruna in Czech, noted as Kč in shops and CZK in banks). One crown, in theory, is divided into 100 haler. Coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 crowns. Bills come in denominations of 50, 100, 200, 500, 1,000, and 5,000 crowns. The euro is not in circulation in the Czech Republic, though euros are sometimes accepted at large hotels and at some shops. Dollars are usually not accepted as payment. At press time, one U.S. dollar was worth about Kč 20; one euro was worth about Kč 27; and one pound was worth about Kč 38.

ORIENTATION TOURS See "Tours," below.

PARKING Parking in Prague is a nightmare. To park in the center requires a special permit available only to residents. Parking garages and paid parking lots can be very expensive. In public parking areas, there are no parking meters; instead buy temporary parking permits at machines and display the piece of paper on your dashboard. Parking rates in the center run about Kč 40 an hour. Parking on streets outside the immediate center is free, but good luck finding a spot.

PASSES The **Prague Card** offers free entry to 55 attractions, including Prague Castle (but not the Jewish Museum), for 740 Kč for adults and 490 Kč for students. You can buy the pass at select hotels and travel agencies, and at Prague Information Service offices (see "Tourist Offices" below).

PASSPORTS If your passport is lost or stolen, contact your country's embassy or consulate immediately. (See "Consulates & Embassies," above.) Before you travel, you should copy the critical pages and keep them in a separate place.

PHARMACIES Pharmacies (*apteka* in Czech) are recognizable by the big green cross on the door. Pharmacies sell both prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Most are well stocked, though pharmacists may not always be willing to fill an out-of-country prescription (so be sure to carry extra medication if need be). Most pharmacies are open from 8am to 6pm, though a few maintain 24-hour service. Your hotel should be able to locate an all-night pharmacy in a pinch.

SAFETY Violent crime against tourists is rare, but pickpockets and scams are common. Watch your purses and wallets while on crowded trams and metro cars. Tram no. 22 is especially notorious for pickpockets. Report any theft to police for insurance purposes, and immediately cancel all credit cards. For more information, consult the U.S. State Department's website at www.travel.state.gov; in the U.K.,

consult the Foreign Office's website, www.fco.gov.uk; and in Australia, consult the government travel advisory service at www.smartraveller.gov.au.

SENIOR TRAVELERS Mention that you're a senior when you make your travel reservations. As in most cities, people over the age of 60 qualify for reduced admission to theaters, museums, and other attractions, as well as discounted fares on public transport.

SMOKING Restaurants are now required to offer nonsmoking seating, but this is often forgotten about in practice. Ask the manager to seat you in a nonsmoking area if you are bothered by cigarette smoke. Pubs, particularly the older, more traditional pubs, can be very smoky, and little provision is made for the nonsmoker.

SPECTATOR SPORTS The Czech Republic is an ice hockey superpower, and the two local Prague teams, **Slavia** and **Sparta,** traditionally sport NHL-quality sides. Buy tickets at the arena on game day. Slavia plays at **Sazka Arena,** metro line B: Českomoravská (☎ 266-121-122). Sparta plays at **T-Mobile Arena,** Za Elektrárnou 419, Holešovice (☎ 266-727-443). Soccer is also very popular, with the season running from August to May (and a break during the coldest months of Dec and Jan). The city's main team is **Sparta Praha.** It plays its home games at **Axa Arena** (formerly called Toyota Arena), Milady Horákové 98, Letná (☎ 296-111-400). This is also where the Czech national team plays its home games. Buy tickets at the box office on game day.

STAYING HEALTHY Prague poses no particular health hazards. Tap water is safe to drink, but if in doubt, drink bottled water, which is cheap and abundant.

TAXES value-added tax, or VAT (DPH in Czech), is 19%, but non-E.U. visitors can get a partial refund if you spend 2,000 Kč or more within 1 day at shops that participate in the VAT refund program. The shops will give you a form, which you must get stamped at Customs. (Allow extra time.) Mark the paperwork to request a credit card refund; otherwise, you'll be stuck with a check in euros. An option is to ask for a **Global Refund form** (☎ 800/566-9828; www.globalrefund.com) when you make your purchase, and take it to a Global Refund counter at the airport. Your money is refunded on the spot, minus a commission.

TAXIS Watch for dishonest drivers. Avoid hailing cabs on the street or in popular tourist areas like Wenceslas Square. The best bet is to have someone phone for a taxi or to call one yourself. Two reliable taxi companies include AAA (☎ 222-333-222; www.aaa-taxi.cz) or City Taxi (☎ 257-257-257; www.citytaxi.cz).

TELEPHONES Working public phones are few and far between thanks to the rapid growth of mobile phones. To use a pay phone, you must buy a prepaid card from tobacco and magazine kiosks (cards are available for Kč 200). Simply insert the card, listen for the dial tone, and dial. You can use pay phones with prepaid cards to dial abroad.

The country code for the Czech Republic is 420. To dial the Czech Republic from abroad, dial the international access code (011 in the United States) plus the unique nine-digit local number (there are no area or city codes in the Czech Republic). Once you are here, to dial any number anywhere in the Czech Republic, simply dial the nine-digit number.

To make a direct international call from the Czech Republic, dial 00 plus the country code of the country you

are calling and then the area code and number. The country code for the U.S. and Canada is 1; Great Britain, 44; Ireland, 353; Australia, 61; and New Zealand, 64.

TICKETS See "Buying Tickets," p 132.

TIPPING The Czech Republic is not a tipping culture, but waiters still expect small gratuities at restaurants. As a rule of thumb, on small bills round up to the next 10 Kč interval (if the bill comes to Kč 74, for example, give the waiter Kč 80). On larger bills or in very nice places tip up to 10% (but not higher) for good service. Tip taxi drivers a few crowns, but no more (if the bill is Kč 152, give Kč 160).

TOILETS Every large metro station has a passably clean public toilet that you can use for Kč 5. Otherwise, search out restaurants or cafes and use the facilities in return for the price of a coffee or soft drink.

TOURIST OFFICES The official Prague Information Service has several locations around town: Staroměstské nám. 1 (inside the Old Town Hall), Hlavní Nádraží (the main train station), and the Malá Strana bridge tower (☎ 236-002-562; www.prague-info.cz). In addition to dispensing maps and advice, the staff can help book tours, excursions, concert tickets, and hotel rooms.

TOURIST TRAPS Prague has its share of scams. Don't be tempted to change money on the street; you'll inevitably get ripped off. Be very wary of anyone who might approach you claiming to be a police officer and asking for identification. Also, be sure to watch wallets and valuables on crowded tram and metro cars. Pickpockets abound.

TOURS Several companies offer bus and walking tours (often combined) of Prague. Martin Tour at Štěpánská 61 (☎ 224-212-473; www.martintour.cz) and Premiant at Palackého 1 (☎ 296-246-070; www.premiant.cz) have a similar range of tours at similar prices. Precious Legacy Tours at Široka 9 (☎ 222-321-951; www.legacytours.net) specializes in Judaica and cultural tours. Most tours leave from bus stops near Náměstí Republiky.

TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES Wheelchair-bound travelers or those with restricted mobility will have endless problems with Prague's stairs, cobblestones, and curbs. Though some newer buildings, and many four- and five-star hotels, are wheelchair-accessible, the city is years behind in making its streets and public buildings available to all.

VAT See "Taxes," above.

WEATHER See "Climate," above.

Useful Phrases & Menu Terms

Although Czech is a very difficult language to master, you should at least make an attempt to learn a few phrases. Czechs will appreciate the effort and will be more willing to help you out.

Czech Alphabet

There are 32 vowels and consonants in the Czech alphabet, and most of the consonants are pronounced about as they are in English. Accent marks over vowels lengthen the sound of the vowel, as does the *kroužek,* or little circle "˚," which appears only over "o" and "u."

A, a	f*a*ther	N, n	*n*o
B, b	*b*oy	Ň, ň	Ta*ny*a
C, c	gets	O, o	*aw*ful
Č, č	*ch*oice	P, p	*p*en
D, d	*d*ay	R, r	slightly trilled *r*
Ď, d'	*D*ior	Ř, ř	slightly trilled *r* + *zh* as in Per*s*ian
E, e	never	S, s	seat
F, f	*f*ood	Š, š	cru*sh*
G, g	*g*oal	T, t	*t*oo
H, h	un*h*and	Ť, t'	no*t y*et
Ch, ch	Lo*ch* Lomond	U, u	r*oo*m
I, i	n*ee*d	V, v	*v*ery
J, j	*y*es	W, w	*v*ague
K, k	*k*ey	Y, y	fun*y*
L, l	*l*ord	Z, z	*z*ebra
M, m	*m*ama	Ž, ž	azure, pleasure

Everyday Expressions

ENGLISH	CZECH	PRONUNCIATION
Hello	**Dobrý den**	*doh*-bree den
Good morning	**Dobré jitro**	*doh*-breh *yee*-troh
Good evening	**Dobrý večer**	*doh*-bree *veh*-chair
How are you?	**Jak se máte?**	*yahk* seh *mah*-teh
Very well	**Velmi dobře**	*vel*-mee *doh*-brsheh
Thank you	**Děkuji vám**	*dyek*-ooee vahm
You're welcome	**Prosím**	*proh*-seem
Please	**Prosím**	*proh*-seem
Yes	**Ano**	*ah*-no
No	**Ne**	neh
Excuse me	**Promiňte**	*proh*-min-teh
How much does it cost?	**Kolik to stojí?**	*koh*-leek taw *stoh*-ee
I don't understand.	**Nerozumím.**	*neh*-roh-zoo-meem
Just a moment.	**Moment, prosím.**	*moh*-ment, *proh*-seem
Good-bye	**Na shledanou**	*nah* skleh-dah-noh-oo

Traveling

Where is the . . . ?	**Kde je . . . ?**	*gde* yeh . . .
bus station	**autobusové nádraží**	*au*-toh-boos-oh-veh *nah*-drah-zhee
train station	**nádraží**	*nah*-drah-zhee
airport	**letiště**	*leh*-tyish-tyeh
baggage check	**úschovna zavazadel**	*oo*-skohv-nah *zah*-vahz-ah-del
Where can I find a taxi?	**Kde najdu taxi?**	*gde nai*-doo *tahks*-eh
Where can I find a gas station?	**Kde najdu benzínovou pumpu?**	*gde nai*-doo *ben*-zeen-oh-voh *poomp*-oo
How much is gas?	**Kolik stojí benzín?**	*koh*-leek *stoh*-yee *ben*-zeen

ENGLISH	CZECH	PRONUNCIATION
Please fill the tank.	**Naplňte mi nádrž, prosím.**	*nah*-puln-teh mee *nah*-durzh, *proh*-seem
How much is the fare?	**Kolik je jízdné?**	*koh*-leek yeh yeesd-neh
I am going to . . .	**Pojedu do . . .**	*poh*-yeh-doo doh . . .
One-way ticket	**Jízdenka**	*yeez*-den-kah
Round-trip ticket	**Zpáteční jízdenka**	*zpah*-tech-nee *jeez*-den-kah
Car-rental office	**Půjčovna aut**	*poo*-eech-awv-nah ah-oot

Accommodations

I'm looking for . . .	**Hledám . . .**	*hleh*-dahm . . .
a hotel	**hotel**	*hoh*-tel
a youth hostel	**studentskou ubytovnu**	*stoo*-dent-skoh *oo*-beet-ohv-noo
I am staying . . .	**Zůstanu . . .**	*zoo*-stah-noo . . .
a few days	**několik dnů**	*nyeh*-koh-leek dnoo
2 weeks	**dva týdny**	dvah tid-*neh*
a month	**jeden měsíc**	*yeh*-den *myeh*-seets
I have a reservation.	**Mám zamluvený nocleh.**	mahm *zah*-mloo-veh-ni *nohts*-leh
My name is . . .	**Jmenuji se . . .**	*meh*-noo-yee seh . . .
Do you have a room . . . ?	Máte pokoj . . . ?	*mah*-teh *poh*-koy . . .
for tonight	na dnešek	*nah* dneh-sheck
for 3 nights	na tři dny	*nah* trshee dnee
for a week	na týden	*nah* tee-den
I would like . . .	**Chci . . .**	khtsee . . .
a single	**jednolůžkový pokoj**	*jed*-noh-loosh-koh-vee *poh*-koy
a double	**dvojlůžkový pokoj**	*dvoy*-loosh-koh-vee *poh*-koy
I want a room . . .	**Chci pokoj . . .**	khtsee *poh*-koy . . .
with a bathroom	**s koupelnou**	*skoh*-pehl-noh
without a bathroom	**bez koupelny**	*behz* koh-pehl-nee
with a shower	**se sprchou**	*seh* spur-choh
without a shower	**bez sprchy**	*bez* sprech-eh
with a view	**s pohledem**	*spoh*-hlehd-ehm
How much is the room?	**Kolik stojí pokoj?**	*koh*-leek *stoh*-yee *paw*-koy
with breakfast?	**se snídaní?**	*seh* snee-dan-nyee
May I see the room?	**Mohu vidět ten pokoj?**	*moh*-hoo *vee*-dyet ten *paw*-koy
The key	**Klíč**	kleech
The bill, please.	**Dejte mi účet, prosím.**	*day*-teh mee *oo*-cheht, *praw*-seem

Getting Around

ENGLISH	CZECH	PRONUNCIATION
I'm looking for . . .	**Hledám . . .**	*hleh*-dahm . . .
a bank	**banku**	*bahnk*-oo
the church	**kostel**	*kohs*-tell
the city center	**centrum**	*tsent*-room
the museum	**muzeum**	*moo*-zeh-oom
a pharmacy	**lékárnu**	*lek*-ahr-noo
the park	**park**	pahrk
the theater	**divadlo**	*dee*-vahd-loh
the tourist office	**cestovní kancelář**	*tses*-tohv-nee *kahn*-tseh-larsh
the embassy	**velvyslanectví**	*vehl*-vee-slahn-ets-tvee
Where is the nearest telephone?	**Kde je nejbližší telefon?**	gde yeh *nay*-bleesh-ee *tel*-oh-fohn
I would like to buy . . .	**Chci koupit . . .**	khtsee *koh*-peet . . .
a stamp	**známku**	*znahm*-koo
a postcard	**pohlednici**	*poh*-hlehd-nit-seh
a map	**mapu**	*mahp*-oo

Signs

No Trespassing **Cizím vstup zakázán**
No Parking **Neparkovat**
Entrance **Vchod**
Exit **Východ**
Information **Informace**
No Smoking **Kouření zakázáno**
Arrivals **Příjezd/Přílet**
Departures **Odjezd/Odlet**
Toilets **Toalety**
Danger **Pozor, nebezpečí**

Numbers

1	jeden (*yeh*-den)	16	šestnáct (*shest*-nahtst)
2	dva (dvah)	17	sedmnáct (*seh*-doom-nahtst)
3	tři (trzhee)	18	osmnáct (*aw*-soom-nahtst)
4	čtyři (*chtee*-rshee)	19	devatenáct (*deh*-vah-teh-nahtst)
5	pět (pyet)	20	dvacet (*dvah*-tset)
6	šest (shest)	30	třicet (*trshee*-tset)
7	sedm (*seh*-duhm)	40	čtyřicet (*chti*-rshee-tset)
8	osm (*aw*-suhm)	50	padesát (*pah*-deh-saht)
9	devět (*deh*-vyet)	60	šedesát (*she*-deh-saht)
10	deset (*deh*-set)	70	sedmdesát (*seh*-duhm-deh-saht)
11	jedenáct (*yeh*-deh-nahtst)	80	osmdesát (*aw*-suhm-deh-saht)
12	dvanáct (*dvah*-nahtst)	90	devadesát (*deh*-vah-deh-saht)
13	třináct (*trshee*-nahtst)	100	sto (staw)
14	čtrnáct (*chtur*-nahtst)	500	pět set (*pyet* set)
15	patnáct (*paht*-nahtst)	1,000	tisíc (tyee-seets)

Dining

ENGLISH	CZECH	PRONUNCIATION
Restaurant	**Restaurace**	*rehs*-tow-rah-tseh
Breakfast	**Snídaně**	*snee*-dah-nyeh
Lunch	**Oběd**	*oh*-byed
Dinner	**Večeře**	*veh*-chair-sheh

ENGLISH	CZECH	PRONUNCIATION
A table for two, please. (Lit.: There are two of us.)	**Jsme dva.**	*ees*-meh dvah
Waiter	**Číšník**	*cheess*-neek
Waitress	**Servírka**	ser-*veer*-ka
I would like . . .	**Chci . . .**	khtsee . . .
a menu	**jídelní lístek**	*yee*-del-nee *lees*-teck
a fork	**vidličku**	*veed*-leech-koo
a knife	**nůž**	noosh
a spoon	**lžičku**	lu-*shich*-koo
a napkin	**ubrousek**	*oo*-broh-seck
a glass (of water)	**skleničku (vody)**	*sklehn*-ich-koo (vod-*dee*)
the check, please	**účet, prosím**	*oo*-cheht, *proh*-seem
Is the tip included?	**Je v tom zahrnuto spropitné?**	yeh *ftohm*-zah *hur*-noo-toh *sproh*-peet-neh

Menu Terms

GENERAL		
Soup	**Polévka**	*poh*-lehv-kah
Eggs	**Vejce**	*vayts*-eh
Meat	**Maso**	*mahs*-oh
Fish	**Ryba**	*ree*-bah
Vegetables	**Zelenina**	*zehl*-eh-nee-nah
Fruit	**Ovoce**	*oh*-voh-tseh
Desserts	**Moučníky**	*mohch*-nee-kee
Beverages	**Nápoje**	*nah*-poy-yeh
Salt	**Sůl**	sool
Pepper	**Pepř**	*peh*-psh
Mayonnaise	**Majonéza**	*mai*-o-neza
Mustard	**Hořčice**	*hohrsh*-chee-tseh
Vinegar	**Ocet**	*oh*-tseht
Oil	**Olej**	*oh*-lay
Sugar	**Cukr**	*tsoo*-ker
Tea	**Čaj**	chye
Coffee	**Káva**	*kah*-vah
Bread	**Chléb**	khlehb
Butter	**Máslo**	*mahs*-loh
Wine	**Víno**	*vee*-noh
Fried	**Smažený**	*smah*-sheh-nee
Roasted	**Pečený**	*pech*-eh-nee
Boiled	**Vařený**	*vah*-rsheh-nee
Grilled	**Grilovaný**	*gree*-loh-vah-nee

Soup

Potato **Bramborová**
Lentil **Čočková**
Goulash **Gulášová**
Tomato **Rajská**
Chicken **Slepičí**
Vegetable **Zeleninová**

Meat

Steak **Biftek**
Goulash **Guláš**
Beef **Hovězí**
Liver **Játra**
Lamb **Jehněčí**
Duck **Kachna**
Sausage **Klobása**
Rabbit **Králík**
Mutton **Skopové**
Veal **Telecí**
Veal Cutlet **Telecí kotleta**
Pork **Vepřové**

Fish

Carp **Kapr**
Caviar **Kaviár**
Fish Filet **Rybí filé**
Herring **Sled'**
Pike **Štika**
Cod **Treska**
Eel **Úhoř**
Oysters **Ústřice**

Eggs

Scrambled Eggs **Míchaná vejce**
Fried Eggs **Smažená vejce**
Boiled Eggs **Vařená vejce**
Soft-boiled Eggs **Vejce na měkko**
Bacon and Eggs **Vejce se slaninou**
Ham and Eggs **Vejce se šunkou**

Salad

Bean Salad **Fazolový salát**
Mixed Green Salad **Hlávkový salát**
Cucumber Salad **Okurkový salát**
Beet Salad **Salát z červené řepy**

Vegetables

Potatoes **Brambory**
Celery **Celer**
Asparagus **Chřest**
Onions **Cibule**
Mushrooms **Houby**
Cauliflower **Květák**
Carrots **Mrkev**
Peppers **Paprika**
Tomatoes **Rajská jablička**
Cabbage **Zelí**

Dessert

Cake **Koláč**
Cookies **Cukroví**
Chocolate Ice Cream **Čokoládová zmrzlina**
Apple Strudel **Jablkový závin**
Pancakes **Palačinky**
Vanilla Ice Cream **Vanilková zmrzlina**

Fruit

Lemon **Citrón**
Pear **Hruška**
Apple **Jablko**
Plum **Švestka**

Beverages

Tea **Čaj**
Coffee **Káva**
Milk **Mléko**
Wine **Víno**
Red **Červené**
White **Bílé**
Water **Voda**

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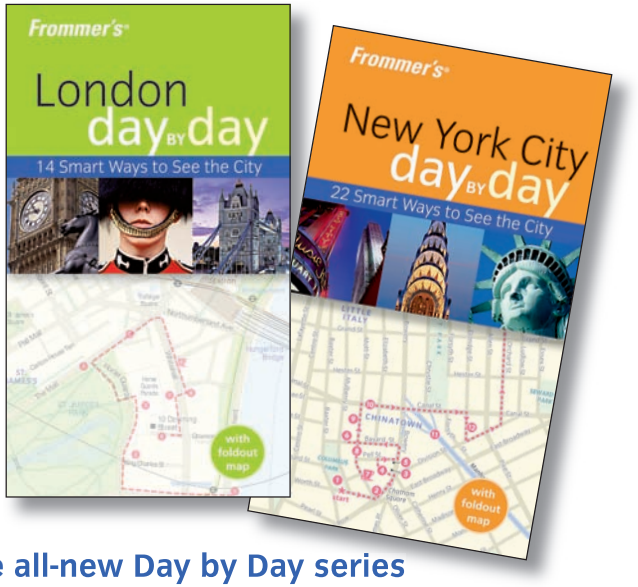

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